Six Degrees of Separation

by coplins

Summary

Sam's convinced he's cursed. Every time he gets romantically interested in someone they up and die or leave him to flee to the other side of the world. Dean thinks he's a moron for thinking that. But what does Dean know? Nowadays he's got Cas while Sam's stuck treading water, working too much, struggling financially, and trying to make his cat stay indoors. (Good luck with that.) But who is he to complain? He's got a good life. He's happy. No, really. He is. Seriously. So what if he forgets to eat sometimes and sleep doesn't come as it should. Dean should stop worrying because he isn't depressed. He isn't. He's fine. He would have continued to be very much "fine thank you" if it wasn't for that blond man with the cold blue hooded eyes outside of the pet store that rudely threw his world for a loop.
Lucifer isn't a fan of people or the human race in general. Since his best friend left to backpack around the world he's alone and he likes it that way. If people just leave him be he's content. Or so he tells himself. But then there's the cat that comes to visit whether he wants it or not. He can live with that, he supposes. That tall beautiful stranger on the other hand? A man can go mad for less.

Notes

The Rape/Non-Con warning is if you're sensitive, THERE IS NO RAPE IN THIS! But there's roleplay of one and if it is a trigger for you then feel warned.

Oh, btw, the link to the spotify playlist for this fic can be found here.

Okay guys. I wrote this when I was deepest into my writer's block so I feel really nervous about its quality. However, re-reading this a couple of months later I felt that maybe it isn't as bad as I thought it was?

It's basically a huge mix of AU suggestions I found on Tumblr that inspired me. Also, the story of how Dean and Cas met is taken from one of the earlier Destiel fics I read and loved. (Modified) So if you recognise it and has a link to it please tell me because I can't find it.

If you're in it for the Destiel then note that this is a Samifer fic first and foremost. Cas is in the picture but Sam & Dean's brotherly bond is the second most important thing in here, not Dean/Cas.

See the end of the work for more notes
Lucy and Luci

Shots are fired!

*Who is this asshole anyway? Seriously. So stuck up and self-righteous.*

Lucifer rolls his eyes yet again at MooseOnTheLoose's last tweet. He should really unfollow the asshole but for some reason he couldn’t. Oh, he had. But then he’d just ended going to check ‘manually’ if the moose had tweeted something new. Better like this, when he got a little chirp every time the self righteous saint decided to brag about what a good person he was. He either tweeted idealistic social commentary or these annoying ‘inspirational’ quotes. Playing at being both Mother Theresa, Buddha, and fighting on the barricades at the same time. *Nobody* can be that good. It just irks Lucifer. This last tweet was something feminist about misogyny and how men should treat women better. (Which they should, that’s beside the point.)

It’s not like Luci doesn’t agree with some of the things the moose is saying. It’s just that he doesn’t believe in it. The human race is flawed, greedy, and evil. Everybody points a finger at someone else rather than take responsibility for their own shortcomings and jumps at any chance to gain something for themselves. He should know. He gets to see it every day at work.

A scratching sound coming from his front door disturbs his annoyed procrastination. “Not today. Go home,” he says to the empty living room and puts his phone away. He turns back to his computer by the desk he has set up where he can watch the TV and work at the same time. The sound stops for a while and he opens the mail client to start going through his mail. It doesn’t take long before there’s a repeated thumping on the window. He ignores it. Then he hears a screeching on the glass and flies out of his chair. “For the love of —!” He hurries towards the door. “Alright! I’m coming!” The screeching stops.

He opens the door and gives the brown tabby cat that slinks in an exasperated look. “You don’t live here, okay? I don’t like cats.” The tabby rubs herself against his leg with a satisfied purr and Lucifer sighs in defeat. “I should just put in a cat door so we don’t have to do this all the time,” he mutters to himself and goes back to his desk, cat hot on his heels, still purring. He sits down and starts answering a mail while the tabby hooks her claws into his jeans and stretches languidly. He ignores the sharp pinpricks of her claws when they penetrate the rough denim. “You’ve got the whole couch to yourself. You don’t need to be bothering me,” which, in cattish apparently means “I can still focus on something other than you so you’re not doing it right.” Because the tabby jumps onto the desk, walks onto the keyboard, and promptly lies down on top of Lucifer’s hands.

Lucifer stares dejectedly at the **Message Sent** prompt on the screen.

“*...Therefore it’s of uttermost importance that we *8/4ä-ö’lnjkfr67hbigkjy bnfsöha*” is the last sentence in the mail.*

“You’re ruining my reputation as a professional,” Luci says and scoops the cat up, putting her in his lap and scratching her behind the ear. Her purring goes up another notch in volume. “Just for the record—I hate cats,” he states and kisses her head with a fond smile. One handed he types a quick mail to the client he’d been writing before the cat decided to add her piece to it and hit send. “My sincerest apologies. I thought cats were supposed to hunt vermin, not be vermin. Seems I was wrong. Please disregard my furry trespasser’s input to your case. I will get back to you shortly. -
“Nick Alighieri” It’s a bit more informal than he’d usually would address a client but a personal touch may be for the best to salvage this.

He lets the cat climb up on his shoulders, disregarding sharp claws scratching his skin through the tee. She drapes herself around his neck and falls asleep, leaving him free to focus on work. He’s always considered himself more of a dog person. Cats are little shits. Proud, selfish, seekers of attention that does not take no for an answer. Their only redeeming quality is their honesty. They fuck something up for you they’ll go “Yeah, twas me. So?” with a disdainfully arched eyebrow. And then there was the ever present “I meant to do that”-attitude. And that they were soft and cuddly. And funny. That was a bit of redeeming qualities too. Luci’s sure every cat has Everybody Loves Me by OneRepublic playing on a loop in their head.

Finishing work goes at a flying pace with the steady warm weight sleep-purring on his shoulders. He gets a reply to the apology mail, and it’s startlingly personal, eliciting a laugh out of him. “It’s okay. I’ve got a vermin problem of my own today,” the message reads but with a picture attached. The client has taken a selfie (looking crestfallen) from a high angle so one can see the living room he’s standing in. There are muddy pawprints everywhere and in the middle of the floor a half-grown happy chocolate lab puppy is sitting, practically drenched in mud.

“Lucky thing you’ve got a white couch then, eh? ;)” Luci replies, totally unprofessionally. Oh well. It is Saturday and he’d just mailed his real statement about the client’s case to him so…

He shuts off the computer and checks his phone in case he’d missed a tweet-chirp from the moose. (He hasn’t.) Then he reaches up and lifts the cat into his lap, petting and scratching her. “Hey. What’s this? This is new.” There’s a nametag on her necklace along with a little tube that hasn’t been there before. He reads the name tag. “Mimi?” he scoffs and makes a face. “Like hell you’re a ‘Mimi’. What kind of blind dick owns you? You’re way too evil for a name like that. You’d fit better with my name than with ‘Mimi’.”

Luci snaps the necklace open and removes the name tag. He opens the tube to find a little paper inside. With tiny print it says “Mimi is not abandoned. If you find her, please return her to me. - Sam” along with a phone number. Luci sniggers. “Well, well, Sammy. Seems you’re the abandoned one.” He looks down affectionately on the furry fiend currently kneading his thighs contentedly. She had just showed up one particularly hot day a couple of months ago when Luci had his door open, looked around, and then sat down on the couch beside him to clean herself like she’d just decided that “Yes. This is my abode. I own this place now.” And that was that. She came and went as she pleased. Not as Luci pleased. He slept with a window open or it’d get too hot. Since cats obviously are liquid she had no problem oozing through the small gap. Her favoured sleeping place was on his face. He’d been woken up countless of times by her innocent attempts to smother him. Never once had it occurred to him to throw her out when she came. Adding a water bowl to the kitchen, a litterbox in the bathroom, plus cat food to his grocery shopping list was for him a much more natural response to the intruder in his life.

“What do you say? Should you be named after me?” he asks with a smirk. “I bet Sammy wouldn’t like that. Personally I think Lucifer would suit you. Lucy for short. ‘S better than just ‘cat’ I suppose… and I’m not calling you ‘Mimi’.”

‘Lucy’ meows and rubs her head against his chin.

“Lucy it is then. I’m going to nip out for a few errands,” he says and puts her collar back on. “See you in a bit.”
then a blond man in his mid thirties grabs the woman by her upper arm and yanks her back to the curb. The car misses her by a couple of inches. The woman on the other hand didn't register the car that nearly ended her life. She starts screaming and hitting the man who saved her. "GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME!" Another man hurries to her defence, shouting something about not harassing women. Sam can hardly believe his eyes. It's like watching a whole other kind of car crash. The blonde hero throws his hands up and turns on his heel, walking away with a fed up expression. He’s heading in Sam's direction. He’s got stubble and heavy eyelids, his eyes are cold and he does look a bit villainous. (Sam kinda likes it.) Especially with the scruffy jeans and the military green tee he's wearing. Sam wants to say something to him. Let him know that someone saw what he really did. Unfortunately the man turns into the pet store before he's close enough and there's a brief moment just before he goes into the store that their eyes meet and Sam just freeze up by the sheer disdain in them. Sam can’t even get a smile in place before the guy is gone.

Sam feels himself blush out of shame. The man is a friggin hero and got treated like shit. Sam should have said something, called out and come to his defense when the woman attacked him. Instead he’d just stood there watching it happen. It wasn’t fair. He considers going after the man but then Dean rolls up with the Impala and honks it’s horn. Sam gets into it and opens up Twitter on his phone.

His phone chirps with a Twitter notification. Moose has tweeted. Great. What wisdom do you have to offer us now? Luci thinks sarcastically as he opens the tweet. “Don't assume. Things may not be what they seem to be. Get all the facts before you judge.” Lucifer blinks stupidly at the screen for a while. Is this a joke? He feels like he’s being personally fucked with. You’re wrong, antler boy. You should assume and act accordingly. Like if you saw a stupid bitch about to step in front of a moving vehicle. You rightly assume they’re too dumb to stay alive on their own, and you should let nature run its course. But no. You pull them out of traffic and what do you get? Accusations of molestation, being assaulted, and then gawked at by the most stupidly good looking man you've ever seen. Granted, the tall gorgeous creature outside the store was an anomaly in his life. His stomach had done an idiotic little flip flop at the sight of him. Then he’d felt instant resentment at the guy, probably judging the hell out of him for 'molesting' that 'poor woman'. It’s not like he'd have a chance with one of the beautiful people anyway. Not unless they were power hungry, greedy and generally unpleasant. His income and reputation saw to that. They’d be disappointed when they came to his house, expecting a luxury mansion and getting a small one storey house with a flower garden in the back and a smaller lawn in the front.

His name didn’t help his case. Even as a small child parents would prevent their kids from playing with him. That he’d been given the name by his parents at an age where he’d just figured out how to breathe by himself and couldn't possibly influence his name by personality was of no consequence. Good Christians didn’t consort with 'Lucifer'. He'd spent a lot of time of his school years fighting bullies. They’d call him Satan which he hated. They’d also call him Luci, telling him it was a girl's name. He actually liked Luci. And he didn’t give a flying fuck if it was a girl's name or not. Using different pronouns didn’t change who he was.

In college he'd started going by his second name, Nicholas, Nick for short. He resented that he was treated different based on his name alone. Not completely different though. Like someone had once told him - "You look like one of the bad guys in a movie."

After that he’d given up on trying to show people who he really was and just gone for living up to their expectations. He went by Nick professionally, but made no secret of his real name. If they treated him like a monster, well then he could just as well be one.

Moose latest tweet felt like a sarcastic mockery of his whole life. He grits his teeth and puts his phone away. While he walks around the petstore putting stuff in the shopping trolley he wishes he
could get back at the moose somehow. Give him the mental equivalent of a kick in the shin. Annoy him as much as he annoys Lucifer. Sure, it's petty and vindictive, but Luci at least never claims to be above that. Not like ‘Mr. Perfect’ himself.

By the register they have metal name tags in golden colour. "We engrave the name while you wait!" a sign advertises. He counts the name tags. "Are these all you’ve got?" he asks the cashier, indicating the gold ones. There’s sixteen of them. There’s silvery ones too, and ones in metallic colours, but gold will suit Lucy the best. He’d buy a pure gold one in the jewelry store if he didn’t anticipate ‘Sam’ to put up a fight about this. At least, he hoped so, feeling a tingle of anticipation at the prospect of a name related cat war. It was possible Sammy would just fold when Lucy came home with a new name tag. He’d be disappointed if that happened.

“Yes, sir.”

“Good. I’ll take all of them. I want them engraved.”

“All of them, sir?”

Fresh out of patience after the brush with the woman he saved he pins the cashier with a cold stare. “Did I stutter?”

She flinches. Sometimes it was a good thing looking like a movie villain. People talked behind his back and said all manners of horrid things about him, but they’d jump to obey in fear. “No, sir. But it’ll take some time to get them done.”

“Time, I’ve got.”

“I’ll get to it then, sir. You can choose from these fonts…” She shows him a set of typefaces and he chooses the one most like his own handwriting, an airy, elegant, flowing script. He gives her a fake close lipped smile and pretends not to see the facial expression she makes when he tells her he wants “Lucifer” engraved on all of them.

Lucy watches with interest when Lucifer takes the door of its hinges and puts it on trestles in the driveway outside of his garage, but then a butterfly passes and Lucy gets distracted following it around the corner of the house. It doesn’t take too long to install the cat door he bought earlier today and the weather is nice. His head is blessedly empty while he works. He enjoys this, working with his hands. Same as tending his garden. He has a talent for tending plants. “Green fingers” as they say. His front lawn is ringed with the most beautiful rose bushes in the whole neighbourhood—possibly the whole city—inside the white picket fence. The air is pleasantly heavy with their perfume.

His harmony is temporarily disrupted when he notices that the “For Sale” sign is gone from the lawn next door. The house has been empty for over a year and though it’s garden looks like shit Luci has liked it that way. His other neighbour is an old man who’s doesn’t require much interaction beside the odd polite nod if they happen to get their newspaper at the same time.

Before he mounts the door again he goes to the garden in the back to water the flowers he kept. He had two top-bar bee hives there and all the flowers and bushes in the back he’d planted only for their sake. You could only move around through small walkways between the thick rows of flowers. There was a narrow porch out back that he never used. This patch of land was an explosion of colour and scent, but personally, he preferred the roses in front of the house. Even if he did, on occasion, harvest honey and wax from the hives he kept the bees mainly to preserve life. Without the industrious pollinators many species would die from starvation, humans included. (Although, humans had it coming.)
An indignant meow and a brown streak fleeing into one of his open windows informed him that Lucy hadn’t appreciated an impromptu hosedown where she’d been hidden in a shrubbery doing whatever cats do when they lurk in the underbrush. Luci sniggers. It’s a small—albeit unintentional—revenge for the half eaten dead mouse that she’d delivered onto his chest last week when he had fallen asleep on the couch. Not that he didn’t appreciate the thought behind her gifts, but they were gross. Simple as that.

Watering done he refills the bird feeder, and the hummingbird feeder out front outside of his kitchen window, checks that the water is clean and trickling freely in the birdbath, and finally mounts the door back in place. “Lucy? You still inside?” he calls out towards the inside of the house while the door is still open. The cat comes to investigate why he’s yelling. He very much doubt it has anything to do with him calling her ‘Lucy’ rather than ‘cat’. He closes the door from the inside and gets down on his knees. “I don’t know if you’ve got one of these at home but look,” he pushes the cat door open to show her, “now you can come and go as you like and can stop pestering me to come open for you, okay?”

She just blinks at him. He sighs and gets up, goes into the kitchen and fetches a small piece of leftover grilled chicken, something he knows she likes. When he comes back to the door and sits down he shows her the chicken. “You want this?” She gets up and walks towards him. “You’ll have to show me you know how this works then,” he says and reaches through the cat door, putting the chicken outside and retracting his hand. Lucy pushes through the flap and Lucifer is pleased. Even more so when Lucy comes back in and rubs herself against him, purring.

That problem solved he goes to sit by his desk after a quick clean up, Lucy taking the opportunity to curl up in his lap. He unfurls the little note from Lucy’s collar and reads it again, trying to come up with a good response. He turns on the computer and printer and writes “Like you said, Sammy - she is not lost. It’s probably the ridiculous name you gave her that makes her run away from you every chance she gets. No worries, I fixed it. - L”. He prints it out in a small font size and cuts the note with a pair of scissors to fit in the little tube on Lucy’s collar. He takes the collar off the cat, hangs on one of the ‘Lucifer’ nametags and puts the note in the tube. To make sure Sam will read the note he uses some red electric tape he writes “Sammy” on with a thin marker and tapes it around the tube. “There we go. You think we can rouse some ire out of Sam?” he asks the cat with a little smirk playing on his lips. She only purrs in response. “You know, there is a chance that he… or she come to think of it, won’t ever let you out again after this, and then what will you do?” Probably pee on his carpet or something like that, Luci thinks. Cats are good at that kind of warfare. He thinks that if Lucy really wants to go outside there’s nothing Sam can do to stop her short of euthanasia.

He leans back in his desk chair and closes his eyes, feeling rather content. His phone chirps and his hackles are instantly up. The goddam moose is at it again. He checks the tweet by compulsion. “Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none.”

He scoffs. “Fucking Shakespeare? You’re quoting Shakespeare at us now, elk man?” And what a stupid quote to choose. You can’t love everybody. The world’s too full of aholes for that—mean, greedy, nasty people that doesn’t give a shit about anyone save themselves. They don’t deserve to be loved by default. And trust? You can’t trust anyone either. Everyone is the center of their own universe—which means they’ll end up hurting you or betraying you even if they’re well meaning. It’s nothing wrong with being the center of your own universe, that’s how it should be. Every living being sees the world through their own point of view. That’s just natural.

Lastly ‘Do wrong to none’ is impossible. By that rule they might as well make abortion compulsory and be done with it. To wrong nobody you had to obliterate every ounce of personality, every free thought and desire you had, and then what’s the point? “I knew you were annoying, moose. I didn’t know you were stupid too,” he mutters.
He’s itching to debate with the moose-person but he can’t use his own Twitter account for that. He has a reputation to uphold, and moose doesn’t have private messaging switched on. But maybe he could email the moose. Once the idea takes hold he feels a thrill of excitement in his abdomen. He makes a username search on gmail, yahoo, hotmail and every other email provider he knows. He even checks facebook, YouTube, and the godawful site Tumblr. But the result is the same. **Sorry. We can’t find a user by that name. Are you sure you spelled it correctly?**

Disappointed he leans back in his chair again. Lucy jumps up on the desk and sits on his keyboard. Absentmindedly he moves the cursor back and forth over the screen, letting her paw at it, trying to catch the elusive arrow. He wishes he could ingrain himself in moose’s life as badly as he himself was affected. And he didn’t really understand why he was so obsessed by the twit, only that he was. It had all begun by a random tweet in the hashtag for a high profile case he’d worked on two years ago.

He stares blankly at the cat pawing at the screen for a while until she got tired of chasing the cursor and jumps down on the floor. She strolls off towards the kitchen to do who knows what and he is left staring at the **No user by that name**-prompt. Suddenly he’s struck by an idea of how to get back at moose and a wide smirk blooms on his face. He eagerly leans forward and cracks his knuckles. He’s got work to do....
The expression "Waiting for the other shoe to drop" sucks. That implies there's only two shoes. Sam knows better.

Sam and the Coffee

Counterstrike

“I wouldn’t ask this of you, especially since it’s on your day off—”

“He’s only asking cuz it is your day off.”

“—but there’s no one else. I would have done it myself but—”

“Pfah!”

“—we’re short on staff down at the hospital so—”

“You’d look cute in that apron though.”

“I have to… thank you Dean… take extra shifts. I don’t know who else—”

“It’s lucky you don’t work at the coffee shop, Cas. Imagine how much extra coffee and baked goods I’d end up eating just to come in and oogle you.”

“I’d be fat by now.”

“—of friends is rather limited… I’d love you anyway, Dean… Therefore I wonder if you’d be so gracious to help out at my brother’s—”

‘Course you would! I’m irresistible!”

“—coffee shop. It’s just one day, between 07:00 and 15:00. Please, Sam. I don’t know who else to ask?” Castiel finishes his harangue and hits Sam with puppy-eyes level: Grand Master. Since Dean started dating Cas two years ago it was the first time Sam had met someone aside from himself who had what Dean referred to as ‘Puppy Eyes of Doom’. It was a power he himself had used, but never experienced, until Cas wandered into their life. Now the expression made sense. There were no defenses against those pleading eyes.

Sam stands in the kitchen doorway, looking at the couple on his couch. Cas had infinite patience with Dean’s obnoxious antics. You’d think they’d been together for an eternity with how they acted, not just two years. Cas had a gift. The gift of ignoring Dean. That was what was going to make the two of them last. Cas would just go straight on talking as if Dean wasn’t running constant commentary to what he was saying. Yet he could still repeat verbatim what Dean had
said if asked about it. Dean was currently poking himself in the stomach experimentally. “Am I getting fat?” he asks.

“No, Dean. ...just a little softer around the edges,” Cas says with a quick look at his boyfriend and a reassuring pat on the knee before he goes back to look at Sam with wide puppy eyes.

Sam lets out a snort of amusement at Dean’s dubious look. He did not like to hear that. It was true though. He wasn’t as ripped as when he worked as an active fireman. Nowadays he just investigated fires to figure out the cause of them. That too was because of Cas. Their love story reminded Sam of romantic fiction and began almost three years ago when Dean had almost died while saving someone from a burning building. Cas had been the surgeon on call that day and he saved Dean. Afterwards Dean kept hurting himself just to come back and see doctor Novak who for some reason kept taking care of him even though Dean’s injuries were way below those he normally tended to. Then two years ago Dean had pulled Cas out of a burning building and that had made them admit to each other they were in love. It was gross really. Cas though, had been badly affected by almost dying in a fire so he’d had a breakdown when Dean was almost trapped in one. After that Dean had made Cas his priority and switched work, investigating fires instead of putting them out. Less danger, better pay and hours, and a happy boyfriend. (Not to mention Sam’s nerves weren’t as frayed anymore.) Dean actually loved his new work so it was a win-win situation.

Sam sighs. “Look, Cas. I don’t know anything about making lattes and mochaccinos.”

“Aw, come on, Sammy. You make coffee all the time. How hard can it be?” Dean interjects.

“Yeah, well. If it’s so easy, why don’t you do it?” Sam snipes and bitchfaces him.

“Can’t. Gotta work,” Dean says with a self-satisfied smirk and puts his feet on the coffee table.

“Please, Sam. You’ll be working with Balt and Meg. They know what to do. You’ll be alright. Gabe needs Meg to man the kitchen and you won’t be doing any difficult chores, just help Balt out.” And again with those pleading blue eyes.

“Alright, I’ll do it. But Gabe will own me one, okay?”

Cas looks grateful and Dean pleased. “Thank you, Sam. It’s much appreciated,” Cas says with a little smile.

“Don’t mention it.” Sam goes into the kitchen and comes back with three Miller beers in plastic bottles. He hands his guests one each and sits down in the recliner.

Dean sniggers. “Oh my god, Sam. Don’t tell me you let she-devil dictate what beer you buy nowadays.”

“Yeah well. I got tired of cleaning up broken glass,” Sam says with a sigh. He’s worried about the cat. Mimi keeps sneaking out no matter how he tried to prevent it. He and Sarah had gotten her as a kitten a year ago when they were still living in his old flat. Then they’d bought this house half a year ago. Less than two months of living together here Sarah was offered a job at a very prestigious art gallery in London and just up and left him and Mimi. ‘It’s my dream, Sam. I’ve got to take this job, I’m sorry.’ Sam wasn’t as heartbroken as he’d thought he be but he still felt very lonely. At least she hadn’t died. Maybe the curse was broken? Dean gave him shit every time he mentioned anything about being cursed but what else was he to believe? Jess, his first love and subsequently the first girl he kissed, died in a housefire a month after they got together when he was 13. Madison, Sam’s girlfriend when he was 17, died from rabies after being bitten by a fucking raccoon. Amy who he dated at 20, was found stabbed in the heart in a motel room where
she had checked in with a fake name. (Amy Pond? Really?) Then there was Amelia at 23. She had left him when her husband, presumed dead, returned very much alive from the war in Iraq. Both of them had died in a car crash not long after. Then there was Brady at 25. He was a bit shady, kept a lot of secrets but holy shit the passion. He went missing to be found later in a shed in the woods, tied to a chair, tortured, and with his throat slit. Then Sam had had a crush on Gabe (before Dean met Cas) that he never acted upon. Lo and behold, Gabe was still alive. Dean had more or less bullied Sam to start dating Sarah and that went well. Apart from the part where she abandoned him and their cat. Sam had the irrational fear that Mimi would die just because Sam loved that furry menace.

“She-devil?” Cas asks.

“Mimi. She pushes stuff down on the floor and I can’t get her to stop. I figured it was easier to replace any glassware with plastic.”

“Oh,” Cas says and chuckles.

“Hey. Where is she anyway?” Dean asks and takes a sip of his beer. Sam is just about to answer that he doesn’t know when Mimi suddenly jumps up on the couch and into Dean’s lap as if summoned. “There she is. Come to make your favourite uncle sneeze?” Dean says with a grin and pets her affectionately. She purrs and rubs her head against his chin.

Sam relaxes. He has no idea how she always manages to come and go as she pleases but now she is back and that is what matters. Instead his head turns to a topic that has occupied his mind since yesterday. “I saw him again today.”


“You’ve got a new crush?” Cas asks, eyes lighting up with enthusiasm.

“It’s not a crush.”

“Sure it is. You should have heard him yesterday when I picked him up, Cas. ‘The guy is a hero, Dean. You should have seen him, Dean,’” Dean impersonates teasingly.

Sam smiles in spite of himself. “He is. And he is hot. In a menacing kind of way.”

“Hah. You’ve got a thing for bad boys there, aye, Sammy? He’s not another Brady is he?”

Sam ignores Dean and turns to Cas. “So get this. Yesterday I saw this woman totally focused on her phone with headphones on, right? And she steps right into traffic without looking. Just before a car is about to hit her this guy comes and just yanks her back to safety. But she doesn’t see the car so she starts screaming and hitting him and then some other guy comes ‘to her defense’, right?” Sam does air quotes. He’s not proud of it but that’s all Cas’ fault. He does them all the time so Sam and Dean had started copying him to mock him and before they knew it it was a part of their regular gestures. “He then walks away without saying anything and it just bugs me that he didn’t get the credit for saving her life. It’s just unfair, you know? Anyway, I saw him on my morning jog this morning. He was out jogging too and I kinda maybe might have followed him for a while. I just wanted to talk to him, you know? But then…” Sam rubs the back of his neck, embarrassed. “…then he threw a look over his shoulder, arched an eyebrow at me and smirked. Like he knew I’d been following him. So then I couldn’t talk to him. What could I say? ‘Hey, I’ve been following you for a couple of blocks but I’m no creepy stalker or anything. I just saw you yesterday and wanted to talk to you.’ I was so embarrassed.”

Dean cackles which makes Mimi stroll over to Cas’ lap instead. “Yeah, that’d go over well,”
Dean says with a wide grin once he stops laughing.

“I mean, he looks kinda mean, but still not really. It’s just…” Sam trails off. It wasn’t a crush.
He’d just seen the guy twice. But there was something about the guy… Plus, jogging behind him (for far too long for decency), he’d really enjoyed the view. And when he had turned his head and met Sam’s gaze. There was no cold disdain like yesterday. No. He’d looked arrogant, confident, amused, and challenging. If Sam wasn’t already red faced from exertion he would have blushed (probably did anyway.) Luckily they’d come upon a fork in the road just then and as Sam turned the other direction he could have sworn he heard the guy snigger. He was mortified. No more accidental stalking heroic hot guys for me.

Dean sneezes and breaks him out of his reverie. “Would you look at that. I know you said you bought her a name tag, but you didn’t tell me you changed her name,” he says, scratching Mimi behind her ear and holding onto the nametag on her collar while he does it.

What?

“What? I didn’t change her name,” Sam says and scrunches his face up in confusion.

“Oh yeah? Then why does her name tag say ‘Lucifer’?”

What?!

“What?” Dean turns the tag so Sam can see. It’s a totally unfamiliar golden tag. The expensive engraved kind, not the cheap plastic one he’d bought. “What the hell…! Gimme that!”

Dean looks confused for a beat until he figures out what’s going on and sniggers. He unclasps the collar and throws it to Sam. “I dunno, Sammy. It kinda suits her,” he teases. Mimi just purrs, unperturbed by the commotion as long as she gets her demanded quota of petting.

“What the hell!” Sam repeats as he stares at the collar in his hands, feeling upset. Real anger threatening to break the surface. Who the hell switched the tag??? And, Lucifer? Really? Come on! Who do they think they are, messing with my cat! Somehow, it was another slap in the face that the nametag hanging on the collar was the expensive kind Sam had been wanting to buy but had deemed too expensive. He had money, but it was still tight with the mortgage and everything. This nametag mocked his inadequacy to provide the best for his cat.

He notices electric tape around the message tube. “Sammy” it says. Pulse raising and thumping in his temples he rips the tape away and unscrews the top. He takes out the paper inside and reads it.

“Like you said, Sammy - she is not lost. It’s probably the ridiculous name you gave her that makes her run away from you every chance she gets. No worries, I fixed it. - L”.

Sam shoots to his feet. “Bitch!” The cat jumps off Dean’s lap and shoots away into the spare room and Cas and Dean stares at him in question. “I put a note in the tube, right?” he explains and waves the note towards them with jerky movements. “I wrote that Mimi isn’t abandoned and whoever found her to please return her to me, along with my name and number. Now look at what the asshole who switched her tag wrote back!”

Dean gets up and snatches the note from him, reads it, and promptly throws his head back laughing. “I like this chick. It’s probably some sassy emo girl.” He hands the note to Cas who reads it with twitching lips before he manages to school his features into concern. Sam’s sure Cas is laughing on the inside. He’s got this creeping suspicion that Cas and Dean shares the same humour but Cas doesn’t emote it outwards.

“It’s not funny, Dean. And she calls me Sammy. I’m barely fine with you doin’ it. You just don’t
do stuff like that okay! Besides, Mimi is by law my property. You don’t mess with other people’s property.”

Dean has taken the note back and is chuckling in delight at Sam’s anger because he’s an asshole like that. Cas frowns at Sam calling Mimi property. It’s not like he thinks of her that way. She is his family. But the law doesn’t take that in consideration so neither could he. After all, the law is what he works with. He could have done for the big bucks. In fact, he’d done straight from law school to one of the biggest prestigious firms there were, but all too soon he’d noticed that it clashed too much with his idealistic nature and switched to the small firm he was working at now, where he could pick his cases. The pay wasn’t nearly as good but his conscious was clear at least. And right now he wanted to smash the law book right into L’s face, whoever she was. “Whatcha gonna write back?” Dean asks.

Write back? The idea hadn’t even struck him. Why would he write back. Mimi isn’t supposed to wander off and become ‘Lucifer’ at some random emo chick’s house. Mimi was his cat. Not that he seems to be able to keep her inside. Maybe he should write something back? Just in case she wanders off again…

Oh god! Why did I say yes? This is so much harder than I thought.

It’s 07:45 in the morning and Sam is stressed the hell out. He’s tired after spending the evening writing a ten page angry letter to the girl who switched Mimi’s tag. Then he spent another two hours shortening the letter into something that could fit on a small note. By the end he was just tired, all the anger gone out of him, so the end result was just a rather lame snipe. Working at Gabe’s coffee shop is baptism by fire. It doesn’t help that Balt and Meg assures him that people will start to wane after 9 o’clock and he will have some peace and quiet before the lunch rush. He rushes around cleaning off tables, writing names on to-go coffee cups, making the simpler sorts of coffee, and restocking napkins and such while Balt mans the register and makes the more advanced orders, and Meg is baking and making salads and whatnot in the kitchen.

Back behind the counter he dries his hands off on his green apron and gets to write names on cups again, handing them out as ordered. He’s bent down when Balt writes one and hands him a large to-go cup and says “This one’s done. Give it to the next in line.”

Sam takes it and straightens, holding out the cup to….

Holy Shit it’s him!

Sam freezes. In front of him on the other side of the counter is the hero he accidentally stalked yesterday. Today he looks nothing like he did this weekend. His blond hair is combed neatly to the side, he’s clean shaven and wearing a grey well-tailored suit, white shirt, and a blue tie. He meets Sam’s gaze with a neutral but amicable expression and Sam feels heat rise on his cheeks. The man’s eyes wanders down to the cup Sam’s holding out to him and his jaw flexes. When he looks Sam in the face again the amicable expression is gone. The shifts are ever so slight but now his look is hard and disdainful. He slowly leans over the counter towards Sam, until their faces are just inches apart. Sam’s mouth has gone dry and he swallows audibly, heart speeding up. The man’s eyelids are heavy but his gaze is sharp and penetrating and thoroughly intimidating. Sam has no idea what he’s doing or how he’s supposed to react. But then the man reaches in behind the counter and takes another large cup meant for some other customer, leans back again, turns on his heel and leaves without so much as a word. Sam almost sags with relief and hears Balt and Meg laugh as the man leaves. Sam turns the cup around to see what it was that pissed off the man. “SATAN” is written in big bold letters on it. “What the Hell!” He turns and bitchfaces Balt who just laughs.
“Relax. It was just a little joke, darlin’. Nothing to get your knickers in a bunch for.”

*Easy for you to say, asshole. You’re not the one who’s been wanting to talk to the guy.*

Sam feels more than a little mortified. What on earth must the guy be thinking about him now?

He *hates* being called Satan! The devil is okay. The word devil has good as well as bad connotations. But Satan is nothing but bad and evil. And now the beautiful creature from this weekend had to go throw it in his face, laughter following him out as he left. Luci hates to admit it but it stings. The younger man is even more gorgeous up close, long hair looking soft like silk, cheeks all flushed, pink lips slightly parted, almond eyes colour somewhere between green and hazel. Spotting him behind the counter had made Luci’s stomach do that disconcerting flip flop again. He smelled good too. It was hard to keep himself from inhaling deeply when he leaned over the counter to demonstratively pluck a random cup without any taunts written on them. The guy smelled fresh and masculine, just a hint of sweat but not in an unpleasant way. It was a big fucking taunt dangling right in front of him, all that beauty and he can’t have it.

And why had he been following Luci yesterday morning? To make sure he didn’t ‘molest’ any other women on his morning run? He had been a pleasure to watch. Luci had run past a number of shop windows reflecting the street just so he could glance at the guy without turning his head. Because he *had* been following. Luci had no doubt about it. He’d taken too many turns for it to be a coincidence.

It grated on Luci that a random stranger had the power to hurt him just because Luci found him mindblowingly attractive. Had he done something to the guy? God know he could have. As well as doing charity cases he represented some really nasty clients and he rarely lost a case. It was doubtful the guy would have written “Satan” without knowing who he was so maybe he was one of those people who got to pay the price when Luci won a case for some big corporation. *Or* maybe he worked for some big corporation Luci had taken down. He was certainly new behind the counter at Gabe’s. Luci stopped by the place a couple of times a week so he should know.

People took for granted that he had no feelings and could not be hurt just because he schooled his features well, had an intimidating name and was skilled and ruthless doing his job. That somehow made them feel entitled to say and do whatever they wanted towards him guilt free. Things they wouldn’t normally condone but he was an exception to the rule by default. Anger burned hot inside of him. He’d use that anger in court and that was a good thing. But today he hated it’s source.

Sam’s exhausted. Who knew working in a coffee shop could be so stressful? And his thoughts kept circling back to *Him*. He was upgraded to a capital letter ‘Him’ now. Sam felt so bad about what happened. He wanted to apologise. To explain what happened. Make it better. But the set up for approaching the guy if he ever saw him again was far from ideal. Sam’s walking home today, just to clear his mind. He’d looked forward to having a day off. He’d worked too hard since Sarah left. Both to keep himself afloat financially and to dispel the loneliness. He was happy for Sarah. He was. Really. It just felt shitty to be left so easily. And the big bed was so *empty* it took hours to fall asleep at night. He kept the door closed at night because Mimi would try to sleep on his face if he didn’t and that made it impossible to sleep at all. He wondered how she got out. Sure, he’d keep his windows open, just a tiny crack to get some cross-breeze or the house turned into an oven. If he let the air condition on his electrical bills shot skywards and that put even more strain on his economy. He *liked* the house. He didn’t want to move back to an apartment.

His phone rings and breaks him out of his gloomy thoughts. He looks at the caller ID, it’s Jo. “Hey Jo. How are you?”
“Sam. I’m sorry to call you about this, but I’m in trouble and need help.”

“Why? What’s happened?”

“I’m being sued for police brutality. I’m so new at this job and I’m afraid they’re gonna fire me. I’ve been told the guy who’s accusing me has hired some hot shot lawyer from the most successful law firm in this city and the one I’ve been assigned is a joke. I don’t know what to do. I can’t afford to hire somebody better and—” Jo rambles.

“Whoa, whoa. Calm down, Jo. Look, I’ll help you, okay? Free of charge. Don’t worry, we’ll fix this.”

“You sure? I mean, I know you’ve got one hell of a workload already and—”

Sam smiles. “Of course I’m sure. That’s what family is for, right? You’ve got time to stop by at my place tonight around six and go through the case?”

“Yes. Sure. Thank you, Sam. I can’t explain how much this means to me.”

“No problem. See you later then,” Sam says cheerily before Jo thanks him again and hangs up. As soon as he hangs up the fake cheer melts off him. Nothing is going right and frustration overtakes him. He’s exhausted and angry. Everyone just dies or leaves him, his economy is in shambles, and there's just no time to stop and breathe. Now Jo's in trouble after less than a year on her job and while he love to help her it means even more unpaid work.

*Why can’t I get friggin break once in awhile?!!*

He wants to punch someone. Just once let go of all the pent up feelings of helplessness and unfairness in life. So he does. He lets go. Turns to the closest car—a Toyota Prius—and kicks it on the wheel, hits its roof. It doesn’t damage the car but it feels good to let it out. So he continues with an angry growl. Just hits and kicks and it's such a relief! No wonder Dean blows up ever so often.

"What? Oil reserves not running out fast enough for you?" says a sarcastic voice from behind him.

Sam jumps startled, and whirls around to face the speaker. It’s Him. "No! I mean, yes. I mean..." He falls silent, face and ears burning from utter mortification. It takes a second to catch up with what He meant by that. *Prius. Right.* The man is leaning against the wall casually, one leg crossed over the other, an arm across his chest, hooked in the bend of the other arm. He is smirking and pulling at his lower lip while studying Sam thoughtfully. His hair is no longer neat like it was this morning. It looks like he's run his hand through it, making it stick up haphazardly. For some reason Sam can’t get another word out.

The man pushes himself off the wall and saunters up to Sam who backs up against the car, heart speeding up. He leans into Sam's space. Close. So damned close Sam can see every line in his face, the beginning of his stubble growth and the starburst of his blue irises under those heavy eyelids. Sam holds his breath and the smirk widens on the man’s face. "If you’re quite done taking the anger of the oil industry out on my car, I’ve got somewhere I need to go."

"I didn't. I wasn't. I, shit," Sam stutters, flushing an even deeper crimson. *Shit, this is mortifying. Whoever invented blushing, I'm not a fan!* He can smell the man. He smells like the crisp bite of winter. How is that even possible in the Californian heat? The man leans even closer, eyes skimming over Sam’s face, catching on the lips before going back to lock on his eyes again. For a moment Sam thinks he's going to kiss him. *Why would he do that? He wouldn’t.* It’s just wishful thinking on Sam’s behalf. Just because the man’s lips look soft and inviting, and his eyes are those
of a predator. It’d make more sense if he suddenly headbutted Sam. He reaches out behind Sam and Sam yelps and jumps when the car door smacks him in the butt. The man sniggers darkly as Sam hurriedly sidesteps to allow him to open the door. “I'm, I'm, I didn't, I'm—" Jesus! Why can’t I form proper sentences in this man's presence?

"Of course you are, coffee boy. Have a good day," the man says and gets into his car. He shuts the door, starts the car and throws one last look at Sam out the window. Catching Sam staring, he winks, then drives off.

Once he’s gone Sam says "I'm sorry. I didn’t mean to kick your car. I didn't have anything to do with what happened this morning. My colleagues pranked me. Would you let me buy you a drink to make it up to you?"

Now if I could just say that to his face instead of just stutter incoherently like a retarded clown, digging myself deeper and deeper!

Luci’s heart is pounding hard in his chest and his stomach’s full of flutters. God, he's gorgeous! And those lips… The way his pupils had widened with fear when Luci leaned in close and hovered a few inches away… it was meant to intimidate, invading people's personal space like that freaked them out more often than not. But this guy… it doesn't matter that the guy’s an asshole. Luci wants him. He lets himself pretend those pupils had expanded due to attraction instead of fear. When his breath hitched Luci had wanted to press even closer, lining up their bodies with not an inch to spare, taste those petulant pink lips. Punish the man by taking—make him pay for his insults with his body. He’d flushed so prettily, it was easy to imagine how he'd look like flushed by passion.

Whoever invented blushing, I'm a fan!

It isn’t the first time Luci has had his car vandalised. But usually it's windows and lights that get broken. This time it seemed more like the man was venting his opinion of Luci rather than aiming to break something. Lucifer could live with that. Being called Satan hurt more. Now though, Luci is in a good mood as he unlocks his door.

“Lucy? You home?” he calls out. There’s a crash from somewhere in the house followed by the pitter patter of small feet as Lucy comes trotting. "Hey you little hellion. Had a good day have you? Taken the opportunity to wreck the house now you got your own door?” he coos at her when she rubs herself against his leg.

He lifts her up and she immediately starts batting at his tie, captures it between her paws and bites at it. He chuckles. “Yes, dear. That’s the only reason I'm wearing it. For your entertainment. Oh look! Your other daddy didn’t like your new name,” he says when he spots her necklace and its missing name tag. “I wonder if he left me a message?”

She ignores him as he kicks his shoes off and carries her into the house, she's fully intent on the tie that flaps back and forth when she bats at it. He starts the robotic vacuum cleaner (which she isn't afraid of) and makes a tour of the house, checking for damages and picking up stuff she's pushed down to the floor. Nothing broken today at least. "I think I need to build something for you to walk around the house on without wrecking it," he tells her then sits down by his desk and switches his computer and printer on.

He takes off her collar and attaches a new tag, then, ignoring her continued play (now including pawing his cheeks too), he opens the tube with a thrill of anticipation, and unrolls the message within.
It's Sam, not Sammy! Her name is not "Lucifer", which is a male name btw, and she's a female. Return her to me immediately the next time.

Luci chuckles in delight. “Looks like your daddy took the bait,” he says and scratches Lucy on the head. “Getting all snippy at me. Seems I have to answer him, don’t I?” He nuzzles Lucy on the head and then types out a reply.

I beg to differ Samantha. Lucifer is the name of an angel. Angels are genderless. But if it bothers you so much, just call her Lucy. I do.

He prints the little note and puts it in the tube. This time he skips the red tape, trusting Sam to figure it out based on the new name tag. "There we go. You think it will annoy your daddy enough?" he asks and kisses the cat on the head before putting her down on the floor. "You hungry?" he asks rhetorically and gets up to head into the kitchen. Lucy follows hopefully, meowing about how starved she is. Lies of course. The little fiend is hardly emaciated and not above sniffing disdainfully at any food she deems unworthy. “You are such a spoiled brat, you know that, right? ” he says fondly and takes the luxury brand cat food out of the fridge.

Lucy jumps up on the counter and tries to get at the container while Lucifer opens it. Luci shoves the cat aside with a huff. “Patience, dammit. This is why I don’t like cats, you hear?" The cat just purrs in response as he pours the dainty moist bites into her bowl. He strokes her back a few times while she eats, then sets out to make his own dinner.

After dinner Luci should get to work, instead he makes a trip to the hardware store and another stop at the petstore. Home again he sets out to build a cat walkway along the walls of his house, complete with tunnels and perches and odd little rope bits with tassles at the end that Lucy can play with. The cat herself isn’t at home when Lucifer comes back. Perhaps for the best as she would have been in the way or been disturbed by the work ruckus. He isn't done until 11 PM. Then first he sits down to do some actual work, looking over an upcoming case. His douchebag client is suing a young female police officer for police brutality. Luci wishes he was representing the police officer in question instead. But this was not a charity case and he’d do his job either way. After reading up on the case and researching the young officer Harvelle, he picks up his phone to find that he’s missed five tweets from the moose whilst installing the cat walkway along his walls. For once it doesn't annoy him. Instead he sniggers and turns his attention towards the computer, cracking his knuckles...

He doesn’t get to bed until 2 AM. He falls asleep with a smile on his lips and dreams of a tall, beautiful, awkward stranger with dimples.
Penpals

Chapter Summary

Apparently, the Devil's out to get Sam.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Penpals

Covert Ops

Sam has gone over the case with Jo in great detail a couple of times now and his head is swimming. The biggest problem is that she was hired to fill a quota and not exactly welcome on the force. Basically, the commissioner was just waiting for a chance to prove that women were unsuitable to be cops and definitely shouldn’t be doing anything more active than answering phones or making coffee. Jo had used more force than absolutely necessary, and even given the guy a jab once he was cuffed when he tried to lick her face (who even does that?). But it was merited and as far as Sam was concerned fell within the boundaries of self-defense. She was alone without backup against a guy that had 20 centimeters of height and 35 kilos of weight on her, who was aggressive, disrespectful, and threatening. Who also resisted arrest after assaulting a woman and beating the shit out of the man who came to her rescue. This shouldn’t be such a big problem. Jo could have used less force and inflicted less damage. Jo knew that and Sam knew that. Luckily few others knew that. This wouldn’t have been a problem at all if her department had been backing her instead of trying to get her kicked off the force or assigned to desk duty.

The doorbell rings. Sam hasn’t even begun to rise out of the armchair before he hears the door open and Dean yell “Dude! You shouldn’t leave your door unlocked. Anybody could walk straight in!” Sam turns around in the armchair to watch the entry to the living room just as Dean peeks around the corner with a shiteating grin. “Guess who I found sitting outside the door?” He doesn’t wait for an answer, instead he holds Mimi up while giving Jo a nod in greeting. “That’s right. Lucifer.”

“Lucifer?” Jo asks at the same time as Sam says “No, she didn’t!”

“She sure did,” Dean answers and raises Mimi’s head to show the golden name tag on her collar. Mimi has no objection to being manhandled by Dean. As far as she is concerned, any of the older Winchester’s touches were to be considered good petting as long as he started to sneeze and got a runny nose from it. “Better yet, there’s a new note. I’m telling you, Sammy, this girl’s a keeper. You should marry her. I like her!”

Sam feels ire starting to tingle through his body. “You read the note?” The question is redundant. Of course he’d read the note or he wouldn’t be making that comment.

“You guys have to fill me in. What’s going on?” Jo asks with a bemused expression, looking from Sam’s upset expression to Dean’s pleased one.
Cas comes into the room after Dean, but unlike his boyfriend he doesn’t stop in the middle of the floor like a center stage actor. Instead he goes to the couch, gives Jo a one-armed hug and sits down beside her. “Sam’s cat is visiting another house when she gets out of this one. The other person has switched her name tag and exchanged the note in the tube on her collar, Dean’s been pestering me all day about going over to see if there has been a new note,” he quickly explains.

“Hey. I resent that. I wanted to come here to check if my kid brother managed to mess up coffee making today,” Dean protests mock indignantly.

Sam has zero patience for that. “Dean. The note. What does it say?”

Dean swiftly drops the act and goes back to looking like a teasing shit. “Oh, you’re gonna love this, Sammy.” Cradling Mimi to his chest he holds up the note (which had been in his hand all along apparently) and reads: “I beg to differ Samantha. Lucifer is the name of an angel. Angels are genderless. But if it bothers you so much, just call her Lucy. I do.”

"Bitch!’ Sam exclaims and Dean cackles happily. "Are you sure you didn’t write the notes?’ Sam asks suspiciously. First ’Sammy’ and now ’Samantha’. It has Dean written all over it.

Dean sniggers. “Nope. But I guess great minds think alike,” he answers with a wink and Sam bitchfaces him.

Sam hears Cas and Jo chuckle too but ignores them in favour of snatching a paper in front of him and writing “SAM! I’m a man, not a woman. She is MY property! You have no business putting new name tags on her all the time!” on it in small script and tearing off the strip. He holds the strip out to Dean who immediately catches onto his intention and takes it. Of course he has to go read it out loud too—because he’s an asshole like that—before he rolls it up and puts it in the tube, cackling.

“Dude. What’s happened to you? You’re supposed to be the smart one in the family. You’d never guess based on these whiny bitch-ass notes you’re writing,” Dean says and finally goes to sit down beside Cas in the couch. “’Ts like you’re five or something and you’re pulling her pigtails.”

Sam runs a hand through his hair and sighs. “Look, I’m just tired and had a shit day. I don’t want to waste time on this, okay?”

Jo turns her head towards Dean. “You’re supposed to be the protective one in the family. Why aren’t you taking his side?” Not that she seems upset about it, though. Traitor.

“Come on, Jo. I’m not going to protect Sammy from a sassy emo girl petting his cat! That’s ridiculous! Besides, this is good for him. He’s been buried in work since Sarah left. I think it’s great that he’s gotten himself a pen pal, making new friends an’ all. And now that he’s got a new crush—”

Sam groans and sinks down in his armchair at the same time as Jo perks up and asks “He’s got a new crush?”

Dean’s about to launch into an explanation when Cas—who’s been watching Sam this whole time with a concerned frown—raises a hand and snaps his fingers in front of Dean’s face without looking away from Sam. And holy shit! Cas must have some magic fingers indeed (which Dean had been bragging about) because Dean goes still. Even the hand petting Mimi freezes midstroke.

“Why did you have a bad day Sam? Did everything not work out well at the coffee shop?” Cas asks gravely.

“Well. Kinda,” Sam answers. “It was tiring work alright but apart from being stressful Balt and
Meg decided to prank me.” Dean interrupts him with a sneeze. Mimi seems to consider this as a sign of a job well done and leaves his lap to wander over the coffee table towards Sam and curl into his lap purring. He takes the opportunity to remove her new golden name tag and lets himself be calmed by petting the soft warm ball of cuteness and assholery in his lap. “So get this. The guy I’ve talked about—”

“Your crush?” Jo asks.

“Yes. But I don’t have a crush on him.”

“Dude, you were stalking him!” Dean interjects grinning.

“Dean!”

Dean holds up his hands. “Alright, alright. I’ll keep my mouth shut. Go on.”

“Anyway, he comes in while I’m writing names on cups and handing out orders, right? Balt hands me a cup and tells me it’s done and I should just hand it to the next customer in line…” Sam tells them what happened and Dean and Jo cracks up. "It's not funny, Dean!"

"No it's not," Cas agrees. Sam sends a thought of gratitude to him. "It's a very grave matter if Balt and Meg alienates customers when Gabe’s away." Gratitude gone. Of course Cas would go for that angle. Never mind Sam’s mortification as long as his precious brother didn’t lose customers.

"Aw, come on, Cas," Dean says. "It's hilarious. Sam's been swooning over this guy since he first laid eyes on him and every time they meet he messes up more."

It is actually funny. Or would be if it happened to someone else (and he didn't feel like crying about it). Like Dean for an instance. Given how much Sam had made fun of his big brother about his inability to ask Cas for a date he feels compelled to say "Oh, it gets worse..."

"Oh yeah?" Dean asks hopefully.

So Sam tells them about his little breakdown on the car. Dean and Jo are in stitches and even Cas hides a laugh behind a hand. Sam can't help but laugh along at his own misfortune.

"Oh my god! That guy must think you're some hateful psycho stalker with aphasia. And you're like the kindest puppy I know," Jo chortles.

“I know. And the more I mess things up, the more difficult it is to get him out of my mind,” Sam answers with a self depreciating smile. And ain’t that the truth. A couple of days ago he hadn’t even known the guy existed. Now he’s like a burr under the saddle. Sam just HAD to talk to him and make things right.

Much later he went to bed thinking of icy blue eyes and a superior smirk. They followed him in his dreams once he fell asleep.

Luci sputters awake, panic at suffocating temporarily clogging up his brain. A try at taking a deep breath only results in a mouthful of fur. He pushes his intruder off his face and grumbles "I hate cats." Lucy meows—probably calling him out on his lie—and sits on his chest. He twists around to lay on his stomach—yet again displacing Lucy—rests his cheek against the edge of the pillow and grabs another one to hug close. “Don’t you have an owner to sleep on? What about Sam, huh? Or did you smother him already?” he grumbles sleepily as Lucy lays down on his head again. This time his position leaves his airways unrestricted though so he’s fine with it. It’s funny how loud a cat’s purr rumbles when you have it’s body pressed over an ear. It doesn’t stop Lucifer
from falling straight back to sleep. In fact, if anything, it made him fall asleep faster.

The backside of having a cat sleeping on your head is that you don’t hear the alarm. Luci wakes up five minutes before he's supposed to be at work. The upside of owning the law firm you work at is that you can delegate, so he calls in and have his assistant either reschedule his morning appointments or hand them over to some of his other employees. Truth to be told, his firm practically runs itself nowadays. He doesn’t actually have to work. He could just stay at home and watch the money roll in. If he did that he’d probably go mad though. Whatever he thinks about people he still craves the human interaction his job forces on him. He already tried the total isolation way in college. Barely speaking to anyone and studying all the time. That was until a perky redhead sat down next to him in English lit class and for some reason or another decided to adopt him. She is the only one he’d consider to be a true friend. She is happy-go-lucky, fierce, brave, and deceptively intelligent. A real computer wiz that often was underestimated due to all the colourful fandom apparel she’d wear. He misses her. She left to travel the world a couple of years ago and the last time he heard from her she was heading to Tibet.

He gets out of bed and heads to the bathroom. He's happy to note that Lucy follows him, using the elaborate walkways along the walls that he built for her. She remains sitting on it as he goes into the bathroom to relieve his bladder and take a shower. When he comes out she's no longer there. He puts on his bathrobe and heads for the kitchen. He finds the cat on a ledge over the kitchen doorway where she's pawing at one of the tassled strings he attached to her walkway. She immediately climbs down and trots into the kitchen when he comes. She sits down by her food bowl and meows loudly, demanding breakfast.

"I've noticed that you haven't used your litter box since I installed your door. Have you been fertilising my flowers instead?" he asks her as he serve her food. "Not that I'm complaining, mind you. Less work for me." He fixes his own breakfast consisting of coffee and a cheese sandwich and hurries to the bedroom to fetch his phone before Lucy has finishes her food. He always told himself he would get his phone before going to the kitchen in the morning and he always forgot. If he left his breakfast too long he’d come back to his coffee knocked down on the floor and the blasted cat eating his cheese or ham or whatever topping he had on his sandwich on that particular day.

Today he is lucky and Lucy is still chewing her dainty little salmon bites she seems to prefer for breakfast when he gets back. He sits down to read the news on his phone while he eats. The newspaper stopped working for him when the cat decided to move in part time with him. If he had the paper on the table she'd lay on it, if he held it up she'd either sit in front of it or treat it as some kind of toy to bat at and bite. Personally he thought the cat only did it to be annoying. During weekends he still braved the paper despite Lucy's antics if she was there. She wasn’t always there. Some days she didn’t come at all. Or maybe she did, but gave up if he wasn’t at home. She did seem to spend more time here since he installed the cat door.

He’s reading an article about real police brutality (unlike his case) where a cop had yanked a 14 year old girl—wearing nothing but a bikini—around by the hair, when Lucy finish her breakfast and decides to pay him attention. She digs her claws into the fabric of the robe to climb, one paw missing the robe and burrowing deeply straight into tender skin. Luci jumps backwards, ripping the cat off him with a pained yelp. "You sadistic little witch! You’ve got legs to jump with and I know you can make it as you've got no problem with it when I'm not in the room." He holds the cat pressed to the tabletop by a firm grip on the skin of her neck. Tightening it when she tries to bolt, loosening it when she fails and curls into a ball and flattens her ears towards her skull. His intention is not to hurt her, but he doesn't care if it hurts. He leans down face to face with her, ready to dodge a swipe that doesn’t come. "This is not okay, Lucy. I've got cat hair on every piece of clothing I own. I'm inadvertently eating enough hair to cough up hairballs. You sleep on my face, sabotage my work, destroy my things, and are pushy and demanding. Yet I keep my home
open for you. I feed you and see to your needs," he scolds. The cat hisses at him. Luci continues his low pitched rant unperturbed. "It’s not like I expect you to be grateful. More like I expect you to start demanding rent money from me. And that’s okay. What’s not okay is this!" He swipes a finger through the blood trickling down his leg and holds it up by her nose. “I'm not a scratching board! You are not allowed to dig your claws into me when I've got nothing on to protect me, you hear? Christ."

He dries the blood of his finger on Lucy’s fur and lets go of her. He's expecting her to bolt as soon as he does, but she stays in place curled into tight ball, watching him with eyes wide and pupils dilated with fear. “That fucking hurt. Don’t do it again,” he mutters, a bit unhappy about scaring her but more cross about the bleeding wounds on his legs that still stings. “I’ll have to clean this so it doesn’t get infected. You little menace.” He turns and walks out of the kitchen to the bathroom where he makes efficient work of stopping the bleeding from the scratch marks and washing them. He curses under his breath at the stinging but his temper cools down. His legs are full of little pinpricks and superficial scratch marks from her climbing, but usually there’s fabric between her claws and his skin to protect him. He doesn’t really mind the slighter pain from getting those. He worries a bit that he’s scared her off now, that she won’t come back. It’s not like he’s asked for a furry freeloader but he really enjoys her company. It can’t be helped. If she’s gone, she’s gone. Thinking of her it suddenly hits him that she wasn’t wearing a name tag. Sammy may have replied.

That thought drives him back to the kitchen. Lucy is still sitting on the table washing herself, but sinks down to a crouch when he sticks his head in. “Oh good. You’re still here. Hold on...” He goes to fetch a new nametag then sits down by the kitchen table. Lucy tracks him with her eyes, but her pupils are no longer blown and her ears are pointed forward. He reaches out and attaches the tag unscrews the tube and removes the note. Lucy remains still during the process. "Now lets see what your daddy says."

He scratches her absentmindedly behind an ear as he unrolls the note with one hand. The cat relaxes under the ministrations and pushes her head into his hand. As the note unfolds a thrill of excitement runs through him. It’s handwritten. "SAM! I'm a man, not a woman. She is MY property! You have no business putting new name tags on her all the time!"

He smiles widely at the note. "Looks like daddy is a touchy little bitch. Not a fan of your independence, hm?"

Lucy seems to come to the conclusion that he’s no longer mad and they could resume their morning routine so she comes over and rubs herself against his chin, purring. Lucifer kisses her head and studies the writing. It feels personal, being written by hand. Most of the letters are uppercase, but not all. Most of them are connected like the pen hasn’t been lifted from the paper. It’s sloppy but easily read. Whoever owned Lucy was used to write fast but his style wasn’t used to present his handwriting to others. A college student perhaps? No. Could be anyone who needs to take a lot of notes. The paper is simple printer paper and yields no significant clue.

"What do you say, kitten? Should I respond in kind and reveal a part of myself too?" he asks rhetorically. Of course he's going to write by hand too.

He gets up, walks to his desk in the living room, gets his reservoir pen and his expensive off white high fibre stationery. He sits down and writes in flowing calligraphic script.

"I see. Not big on animal rights, now are you, Sammy? Very well. You do know that as your property you're responsible for what she does. Like breaking and entering for an instance. Or
destruction of other people's property. Maybe I should just send you a bill of all the things she has broken this far the next time. She's quite evil."

He waits for the ink to dry before he cuts the note to a fitting size, folds it once and rolls it up tightly. He hears a clutter from the kitchen and chuckles. With all certainty Lucy has pushed his empty cup off the table, back to being a little shit again. All is well in the world.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Alighieri had to cancel. We would have let you know but your client had failed to inform us about the switch in representation. I'll be happy to reschedule your meeting."

Sam holds back the urge to groan. Remind me to kick Jo in the shin the next time I see her. "Very well. I've got a tight schedule but let's see if we can find another time."

Half an hour later he's still there, just having found a time that works for both him and Alighieri. Not that the stuck up secretary was very helpful. He takes his attaché bag and goes to the elevators. Morningstar Law (what a coincidence, the devil seems to follow him) occupies the top five floors of a skyscraper. It’s all glass, chrome, leather, and colourful modern art on the walls. It reeks of money. It’s not the biggest law firm in the City but it’s the most successful. Sam used to dream about working on a law firm like this when he was younger. Sadly you have to choose between idealism and money and since Sam couldn’t ignore his conscious this was never going to be his world no matter how much he wanted it. He’s been pondering the name of Jo’s accuser’s representation all morning. There’s something familiar about Nick Alighieri. When he steps into the elevator it finally hits him. "Fuck!" He runs a hand through his hair in frustration. Of course he’d have to go head to head with the man who, two years ago, had defended Dick Roman, the head of Sucrocorp, in a multi-million dollar lawsuit for adding an addictive substance in their products. The evidence was staggering. Sucrocorp was guilty as charged and Alighieri had still managed to win, enabling Dick Roman to counter sue those that had filed the complaint. Alighieri had not handled those lawsuits, but that was not the point. Sam had debated the case openly and heatedly on Twitter. Sam suddenly felt like pre-serum Steve Rogers going up against Muhammad Ali or Mike Tyson in the boxing ring. Jo’s case wasn’t a very big one and Sam wasn’t bad at his job, but Mr. Alighieri was, well… he played in another league entirely. Sam squeezes his eyes shut and presses his thumb and forefinger against his eyelids. "Fuck me!"

“That can be arranged, coffee boy.”

Sam removes his hand with a jerk, eyes flying open. He hadn’t even heard the elevator doors slide open over the noise of his internal scream. Life just reached a new low because He steps into the elevator with an amused smirk. Expensive suit, clean shaven and hair perfect just as it had been at Gabe’s. Heat rushes to Sam’s cheeks. “I’m a lawyer,” Sam blurts petulantly, because, of all the things to say, that’s the first thing that comes to mind. Shit. That man really short circuits my brain. Good job, Winchester! Real smooth.

The man’s lips twitch in amusement. “Ah. I see. A jack of all trades,” he says and puts himself shoulder to shoulder with Sam, facing the door. “Since I doubt you were sincerely propositioning me just now, I presume your day is not going well?” he says amicably. He is totally at ease, exhuming the air of a lion at rest. Sam envies him his calm. Especially since Sam has inadvertently been a dick to him every time they’ve met.

“Oh no, everything is falling apart according to plan,” Sam answers and tries to smooth his hair into some semblance of order again, probably doing a piss poor job of it. Sam is acutely aware of the few centimeters separating them. He should really apologise to the man for the earlier incidents. Why does the words refuse to come?

The man lets out a surprised laugh and turns his head to look at Sam, eyes almost warm. “May I
inquire as to why, Mr...?"

Sam sighs. “Winchester. I had a meeting with Mr. Alighieri, but when I came here they said it had been cancelled. Not that they had bothered to inform me of that in advance so I’ve had to move around my own schedule for this meeting. Then it took almost thirty minutes to find a new time that suits us both. His secretary wasn’t exactly accommodating.” Sam doesn’t even bother to hide his annoyance. He is running on a very tight schedule as it is.

“That’s a grave oversight of her.” The man purses his lips and hums thoughtfully. “Who do you represent Mr. Winchester?”

Sam is a bit surprised at the question, but he supposes the man works for Mr. Alighieri and might be familiar with the case. “Harvelle.”

The man looks at his wrist watch. A friggin Patek Philippe. It probably costs more than Sam’s whole mortgage. “Well, Mr. Winchester. As it happens, I have time now. So if you wish to discuss the case I’ll treat you to lunch to make up for my secretary’s failings.” He turns slightly towards Sam and arches an eyebrow questioningly.

Wait, what?

“Wait, what? Your secretary? Are you telling that you… that you’re…?”

The man smirks, eyes sparkling mischievously, and turns to stand in front of Sam, extending a hand. “Nick Alighieri, at your service,” he says. Sam blinks dumbly at the hand between them for a second before his brain gives the order to shake it without him having a say so in the matter. He’s just about to make a formal introduction of himself when Mr. Alighieri adds; “…but please, call me Lucifer.”

Sam’s head snap up to glare at the man, his eyebrows drawn down deeply. “You’re joking, right?”

Nick’s eyebrows furrows slightly in annoyance and he tilts his head in that way Cas does sometimes when he sees or hears something he doesn’t quite understand. “Not at all. It’s my birth name.”

The devil’s out to get me. This is a big fucking cosmic joke!

Sam scowls and lets go of Lucifer’s hand. “Look. Mr. Alighieri,” he says pointedly. “Whilst I appreciate the gesture of making time for me after you cancelled our meeting, I don’t have time right now. I’ve got a client meeting and I’ve already set up a new date with your secretary to go over the Harvelle case. I’m swamped and you can’t just do as you please and then expect everybody to fall all over themselves to bend to your will just because you’re sitting comfortably up there on your mighty fine looking high horse. We’ve got lives of our own. I’ve got a life of my own with responsibilities and clients that trusts me to have their best interest at heart. You can’t just come into my life, turn it upside down, and expect me to drop everything for lunch. You’ve got no right! I’m—”

No no no. What am I doing?! Stop. Stop right now! When did I step closer? Christ! He smells soo good. And those lips. Oh my god. I’m fucking things up even worse for Jo. I'm so screwed! Stop talking right now! And for crying out loud - breathe between words, Winchester!

”—busy.” Sam rocks back on his heels. He’d been leaning closer and closer during his rant, until he was intimidatingly close, sharing breath with his antagonist. Not that Lucifer seems intimidated in the least despite Sam's height advantage. He’s unfazed, except for a sharp intensity in his eyes.
and cheeks slightly flushed by what Sam can only presume is anger.

Lucifer lowers his eyelids when Sam leans out of his immediate space. He’s got the look of a predator again. A dominant alpha male being challenged by an uppity youngster, preparing to put him back in place. That’s not quite what happens. Instead his lips curve upward pleasantly. “Well then. I wouldn't want to waste precious time. But if you have a client meeting you better look the part.” Sam forgets how to breathe when Lucifer reaches out to straighten his tie, smooth down the collar of his suit jacket, and push his hair back in place. As he retracts his hands he lets a finger brush along the line of Sam’s jaw. It sends a chill down Sam's spine and makes the fine hairs on his body stand on end. That's when the doors slide open.

Lucifer steps away from him. “Off you go then. Earn your keep, Winchester. Make daddy proud,” he says with a smile that is more a show of teeth.

Sam sends him a glare and stalks towards the exit. His head is a jumble of incoherent thoughts and his heart is pounding hard in his chest. When he opens the door out to the street he turns around to throw a look in the direction of the elevators. Lucifer is still standing outside of the elevator looking at him, one arm crossed over his chest and pulling thoughtfully at his lip with his other hand. When he sees Sam looking he smiles, winks, and gives a little wave. It sets off butterflies in Sam's stomach.

"Fuck," Sam says and quickly hurries out towards his car. Once he gets in he takes a deep breath and runs a hand over his face. It felt like the journey down the 51 floors after Lucifer got in had taken hours. He goes through it in his head once again. It’s ridiculous. At first he couldn't talk to the man at all, and when words finally came it was in the form of a mean angry rant. What’s wrong with me? He’s screwed. This whole thing has just gone from bad to worse. There was nothing professional about this encounter. Luckily Sam isn't the only one who’d been unprofessional. But at least Lucifer (Lucifer? Really? At least that explains the Satan prank.) had good cause and was acting in response to Sam.

Jesus Christ! His crush (it's not a crush, dammit!) was none other than the Nick Alighieri. How is this his life? He should have taken the offer of lunch. He should have called his client and rescheduled. He should have... "Fuck!"

What he should do was just to count this as a battle lost and put Lucifer (No, really? I mean come on! You can’t be named ‘Lucifer’. You just can’t.) out of his mind in any other capacity than as his opponent in Jo’s case. And then, when that was lost (he is a realist after all), just forget all about him. But under the layers of please-shoot-me-now and fuck-my-life feelings there are all those insistent butterflies demanding that he should do a little happy dance because Lucifer had touched him and laughed at his joke. He’s so very screwed.

Chapter End Notes

*huggles her bitter little asshole Luci love*

I'm curious about what you think of my characterisations so far? When I was writing this I thought they were horribly OOC but I'm not so sure about that anymore. I don't need to tag for it do I?
Six Degrees of Separation

Chapter Summary

"Six degrees of separation is the theory that everyone and everything is six or fewer steps away, by way of introduction, from any other person in the world, so that a chain of "a friend of a friend" statements can be made to connect any two people in a maximum of six steps. It was originally set out by Frigyes Karinthy in 1929 and popularized by a 1990 play written by John Guare." -- (Source: Wikipedia)

Lucifer is about to find out the truth of that statement.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

Six Degrees of Separation

Recon mission

Luci stands watching Winchester disappear out of the lobby doors, heart beating fast and stomach making flip flops. For him it's a new low when it comes to how unprofessional he could act. Probably the only thing stopping Winchester from suing him for sexual harassment is how he himself had gone off on Luci’s car. But this encounter didn’t make sense at all. Winchester seemed genuinely surprised to find out who he was, so what was the coffee incident all about? And what had he meant by "You can’t just come into my life, turn it upside down..."? That hardly sounds like he’s talking about a cancelled meeting. Maybe he hated Luci because he thought he’d molested that woman?

One thing Luci knows without any shadow of doubt is that he wants the younger man, and he wants him bad. Like capital letter W-A-N-T. It’s a sucking, gnawing feeling just beneath his lower rib cage. Like he’s starving and Winchester is the only one that can sate him. So fuck it if the man hates him, or thinks poorly of him. People do that. He can live with the fact that Winchester is a grade A asshole too, as long as he could be conquered.

But first thing first.

Lucifer goes back into the elevator, lunch forgotten, and rides to the top floor where his office is located. In the waiting room he barks "Chrissy," angrily. The secretary jumps startled in her seat, attention on him as he walks up to her.

"Yes, Sir?"

"Did I not tell you to cancel or reschedule all my appointments?"

"You did, Sir."

"Then how come my 11 o'clock showed up here?"
"Sir. His client hadn’t informed us of the switch in representation." Chrissy is looking alarmed by now. As well as she should be. He is seething with cold anger, and had he been prone to firing people on the spot he would have. He is known for going through secretaries and assistants as other went through underwear. It was not quite true, but that doesn’t matter.

"Did her former representation not tell you he was no longer handling the case?" he asks coldly.

"Yes he did, but he didn't say who had taken over."

"With other words, you knew someone would show up here for a meeting despite my orders, yet you didn’t inform me about it."

"But Sir—" she begins to protest but Luci cuts her off with a snap of his fingers.

"It was a statement, not a question, miss Chambers," he tells her impatiently and reaches for the phone on her desk. He hits a speed dial number and waits for the signal. The phone is answered right away. "Hi, Curtis. Does that secretary you complained about still work for you? ... Mhm. Good. Not anymore. We're making a switch. Send her up. Your new secretary is named Chrissy Chambers. ... Yes. Good. Talk to you later." He hangs up and turns his attention towards Chrissy again. "You’ve been demoted. You’re now working for Curtis Metatron. Go."

Chrissy looks like she wants to say something so he gives her a warning look. She scrambles to get her stuff and get out of his sight. Lucifer doesn’t like to fire people and tried to avoid it unless they were still on their probationary period. He has very high standards though, needing those around him to work as an extension of himself. The throwback was that he’d help them move on to bigger better things if they were skilled enough to live up to his requirements. Yet rumours around the office had it that they’d been fired. It's all good. It kept people working for him on their toes.

Lucifer goes into his office, leaving the door open, and sits down behind his desk to wait.

Curtis has said that his secretary was "creepy, but too skilled to fire". It makes Luci curious. He doesn’t have to wait long before a stunning woman in a black pencil dress knocks on the doorframe. “You sent for me, Mr. Alighieri,” she says.

Letting your dick do your hiring, did you, Curtis?

"I did. Come in. Miss..?"

"Bela Talbot, Sir."

"Bela, I need you to find out everything you can about the lawyer that represents Harvelle. A Mr. Winchester, and get back to me once it’s done. I mean everything."

"Certainly, Sir. How soon do you need it?" she answers, English accent clear in her voice.

"ASAP. Which means I needed the information yesterday, but I didn't know I needed it."

Bela smirks. “I'll get to it then, Sir."

"Good. Close the door on your way out."

His gaze follows her as she leaves. He’d like her by default for the lack of fear of him. Her beauty didn’t exactly work to her disadvantage. Curtis tended to be intimidated by strong, independent women. Maybe that was why he called Bela creepy? Anyway, this was a test. She wouldn't be familiar with the Harvelle case. She’d have to show she could dig up that information too, then
figure out who Winchester was.

Now that both the excited flutter of his heart, and his anger had died down (so what if he is prone to sharp mood swings? Who isn't?) he finally remembers he was heading for lunch until he had another close encounter with the perfect man. He heads out of his office. Bela is rapidly tapping away on the computer while talking to the phone pinched between her cheek and shoulder. “...Darling, you think that will make you lose your job? What do you think is going to happen if people find out about your little thing?” he hears her say as he pantomimes "lunch" and gets a thumbs up before he heads out.

After lunch he buys one of those pre-cut loaves of toast and heads to the park. He sits down on a bench in front of a pond next to a playground and throws some bread on the path in front of him. It doesn’t take long before he hears the first fluttering sound of small beating wings. The sparrows are the first to come. Not long after comes the pigeons. No mallards in the pond today but a couple of gulls soon finds their way to the party. For them he tosses pieces of bread high in the air and watch them catch it in flight. He loves this, always has. It fills him with calm. Animals instinctively like him and it’s reciprocated whatever he tries to convince Sammy’s cat of. Birds are his favourites though. He can’t exactly say why.

Soon he has a whole flock of birds at his feet, the bravest ones flying up to sit on the bench or his shoulder, allowing themselves to be fed straight from his hand. A content little smile playing on Lucifer’s lips while he feeds them and listens to the laughter from the playground.

A man comes walking down the path towards them. He’s tall and really good looking, with broad shoulders, short sandy-brown hair, and a jawline like he’d been bred for modelling.

First Winchester, then Bela, now this guy. The Beautiful People, all so out of my league.

The man carries a take away bag from a nearby burger joint and he’s watching Luci curiously. Lucifer is expecting him to pass, but instead he sits down on the bench next to the bench Luci’s sitting on, close, but far away enough not to scare the birds. He keeps watching with open curiosity as he digs up his burger from the bag and starts eating. When their eyes meet the guy smiles, cheeks stuffed full, making him look like a chipmunk. Luci smiles back at him and turns his attention to the birds again, leaving him to inhale his burger. When Lucifer a while later throws a piece of bread high in the air for a seagull to catch the guy exclaims “Awesome!” and when Luci turns his head to look at him he grins bright and open. It’s the excited grin of a child, untainted by the restraints of convention of how to act towards strangers. The man has perfect fucking teeth to boot. White and straight enough for toothpaste commercials. Luci finds himself smiling back again and throws another piece of bread in the air, feeling happy about how impressed the man looks when a gull catches it in flight. The laughter from the children on the playground making a nice backdrop to it all.

Their moment is spoilt by a middle aged woman walking on the path their way. She stops and sneers in disgust at the flock of birds. “Filthy stinking, disease spreading vermin," she says.

A pulse of anger hits Lucifer in the gut. He feel like punching her face. Instead he lets out a long suffering sigh and says “Yes. But what can you do? Apparently, if you keep them locked up it stunts their growth so they won't be functioning adults." He gestures at the playground as he speaks and gives her a defeated look. The woman looks absolutely scandalised and the beautiful man cackles in delight. Lucifer feels a thrill of satisfaction at someone getting his humour.

"You can’t talk like that," the woman protests.

“Hey lady! He can say whatever fuck he wants," the man sounds sounding upset, drawing both
Luci’s and the woman’s attention.

"It’s disrespectful to talk about children that way," the woman says, expression pinched.

“No. What’s disrespectful is you seeing two grown ass men enjoying some interspecies interaction of the non star trek kind, and deciding to piss on our moment of peace with your judgemental dried-up spinster opinions. If you don’t like nature, stay out of the fucking park," the man argues, eyes flashing angrily. The woman looks about to say something but he's having none of it. He gets to his feet, frightening some of the birds in the process. "No," he says, forestalling her. "You keep your mouth shut and get the fuck out of here."

He isn’t posturing, but makes an intimidating sight anyway. Bowlegged, scowling, jaws clenching angrily, a badge glinting on his belt and the emblem of the fire department on the chest of his black jacket. It visibly scares the woman who hurries away, casting them a stinky eye over her shoulder when she's at a safe distance.

"Well, well. Aren't you a knight in shiny armour," Lucifer says with a little smirk.

The man grins at him and rubs his neck self consciously. “Yeah well... Besides, it's not often you meet someone who has the whole Disney princess vibe going on, like you do."

 Lucifer tilts his head bemusedly. "Disney Princess?"

"Yeah. I bet if you burst out singing, they’d knit you a cape or something," the man answers and gestures at the birds.

Lucifer feels a carefree laugh bubble up unbidden. “Mh. If I ever need a cape again, I'll make sure to test that theory out." He holds a hand out to bid the man to join him on the bench.

He does, body turned towards Luci and raising his eyebrows questioningly. “Again?”

Lucifer hums and throws some bread to the birds, making the ones scared off by the tumult return. "I don't suppose the term LARPing means anything to you?" he asks a bit apprehensively.

"Dude, yes!" The man practically beams at the mention of the unconventional past time. "You’re a LARPer?" Lucifer nods. “Me too! I'm a handmaiden to the queen of Moondor. Or I was. It's been kinda long since last time. My friend that was into it 's gone and my brother used to go with me sometimes, but he isn’t that big of a fan. I think he just went along to get teasing material on me."

Lucifer grins at him. "My best friend dragged me kicking and screaming to my first LARP. But I loved it. The White Knight of Dawn, at your service." He winks and the man grins in response. “Sadly, my friend does not live around here anymore and I haven’t been to one for years, not since she left. Don’t know anyone else who’s a practitioner.” Lucifer feels a twang of longing for the spirited redhead when he thinks of her. This man reminds him of her. Same openness, same bright eyed enthusiasm, same rapid mood switches if his interaction with the woman is anything to go by.

“Yeah. I feel ya. I mean, once you’re there you make friends an’ all. But going there by oneself feels kinda, I dunno… awkward? ‘Sides, a man like me—”

“—got a reputation to uphold,” Lucifer finishes the sentence along with the man and they share a smile and a look of mutual understanding. In a way this is a very startling meeting to Luci. He feels relaxed in the man’s presence, like they've known each other for a long time already. Usually it takes a long time for him to feel at ease with people. He can act the part, but doesn’t feel it.
A pigeon lands in Luci’s lap and tries to get at the bread still left in the bag. He gently shoves it off. It flaps its wings as it settles and remains sitting on the bench beside him, watching the bread bag with jerky head movements. “How do you do that? Get em to come so close?” the man asks with open curiosity.

Luci shrugs. “It’s always been like that. Animals come to me whether I want it or not.” He takes the man’s hand—ignoring his nonplussed expression since he doesn’t pull his hand away—and lays it in his own lap, palm up. He uncurls the man’s slack fingers, noting the simple gold band on the man’s ring finger, and crumbles some bread into it. (What the hell am I doing?) The pigeon he just shoved off hops back onto his lap when there’s reachable bread available and perches on the stranger’s fingers as it picks at the breadcrumbs. The man laughs in delight and looks from the bird to Luci and back, big open mouthed grin in place. A sparrow joins the pigeon, then another one. Luci keeps dividing bread between scattering it at their feet and dropping it in the stranger’s palm and both their laps until it’s gone. The man doesn’t remove his hand until then, even though he could have done so a lot sooner once the birds figured out he was safe.

“Dude, that was awesome. Thank you,” the man says when the birds start to scatter to find other places with food now it’s gone from here. He offers his hand for Luci to shake. “I’m Dean by the way.”

Luci shakes his hand, he’s got a firm even grip. “Nick. And you’re welcome,” he says, giving his professional pseudo rather than his real name, not wanting to alienate the friendly stranger.

“So do you come here often?” Dean asks.

Luci sniggers, quirks an eyebrow and pointedly looks at the ring on Dean’s finger.

Dean’s eyebrows shoot skywards in realisation of how it came off. “No! I didn’t mean it that way.” He rubs his neck in embarrassment and the corner of his lip curve upward in amusement. “I mean, a couple of years ago, sure. Before I met my boyfriend—” a flicker of nervousness goes over his face when he says that, but is gone as fast again when Luci doesn’t react to it. “—But you know. ‘Sides, I don’t even know if you swing that way. And you’re more my brother’s type. Christ, I’m babbling. Sorry bout that.” His demeanor has shifted from embarrassed to cocksure, contrasting with his awkward babbling.

“Your brother’s type, huh? And pray tell, what type am I?” Luci says with a little smirk and tilts his head in curiosity. He crosses his legs and turns his body towards Dean, resting his elbow against the backrest of the bench and his other hand on his thigh. Body language opening up, exposing chest and stomach, declaring interest. Not so much to flirt with Dean, but to declare that he does indeed swing that way. Dean on the other hand, seems to be a natural flirt and mirrors Luci’s position.

Dean gives him a deliberate once-over with a lopsided smile before looking him in the eyes again. “Alright. Um.. Okay. You’re a well-to-do corporate high-up. Probably ruthless and cold when it counts but nerdy and sweet on the inside.”

Luci snorts. “Sweet?” he asks incredulously.

Dean shrugs. “Yeah. Animals like you and you’re good to ‘em. You know, that quote about you can judge a man’s true character by how he treats animals?”

“By Immanuel Kant,” Luci agrees.

“I was thinking Paul McCartney, but fair enough.” Dean smiles and Luci hums his agreement.
Both Kant and McCartney had said something along those lines. "Plus you’ve got those DIY hands going for ya."

Lucifer chuckles in sceptical amusement and looks down on his hands, roughened from building, repairing, and tending his garden. There are faded scars on them from splinters, thorns, and animal interactions (don’t feed seagulls by hand, their beaks are sharp!). He has long ago given up on trying to make them soft with hand creams. He can’t see how Dean could count them as something positive. Lilith, and others he’d had shorter romances with had complained and told him to hire people to do manual labour for him because he could afford it. They’d called him cheap when he didn’t. Thrift wasn’t the reason he refused. He enjoyed himself. But that wasn’t a good enough reason for them. "Uh-huh. ‘Sweet’ isn’t exactly how I’m usually described.”

“Oh yeah? How are you usually described then?” Dean supports his cheek on his fist, elbow rested on the backrest of the bench. He’s giving Luci his full attention. Luci can’t figure out his angle. What’s he after?

“Evil asshole,” Luci answers with a smirk.

“So you’re a lawyer then,” Dean deadpans, yet again luring a laugh out of Luci.

“I am. And I do represent quite a few scumbags to boot. Going to change your evaluation of me now?”

“Nah. My brother’s a lawyer too. He’s an idealistic little bitch about it though so he won’t—” Dean reaches out and taps the sleeve covering Luci’s exclusive watch, “—ever make these kind of bucks. But that’s not the point. Our justice system is built on everybody having the right to a good defense, right? Not just the poor and kind and innocent. I mean, like me, I used to be a fireman before I became an investigator. I stopped fires and saved people without asking who owned the buildings or what kind of persons the people I saved were. Cas, my boyfriend, is a surgeon, he saves lives too without asking if the people deserve to get their lives saved. The same should apply to the law.”

“That may be as it will, but I make a lot of money making sure some really nasty people get away with quite horrible acts. Now that’s hardly fair, now is it?” Luci counters out of curiosity.

“But that’s life, isn’t it? It isn’t fair. That doesn’t mean those better off shouldn’t have the right to spend money on the best defense they could get. Anyone would do that if they could afford. And if you’re good at something you should have the right to make money on it. Maybe it’s because I know how much time a lawyer have to sacrifice on studies, research, an’ all that shit, but I… Look. Don’t get me wrong. When I hear about assholes like that Dick Roman dude get away with shit, I get as upset as anybody. You know which case I’m talking about?”

Luci nods. “I’m familiar with it, yes.”

“Right. It isn’t right. But in the end it was the jury who set him free, not the lawyer. He was only doing his job.” Suddenly Dean cracks up in a wide grin. “Christ. You should have heard my brother during that debacle. He was torn between outrage at the verdict and full on swooning over the lawyer’s skill. I swear he had a celebrity crush on the dude.” Dean waves a hand in front of his face in a dismissive gesture. “Anyway. I’m gonna be straight with you. When we were younger I had to do some really bad stuff to provide for my brother. Mum died when I was four and dad…” He makes another dismissive gesture, signalling he doesn’t want to talk about it. "So when I was eighteen I was arrested. I was caught red handed, guilty as charged. I was about to end up in the slammer. But an awesome lawyer working pro bono took my case and got me off the hook. So how can I justify blaming the lawyers defending the guilty when it changed my whole life to get that second chance?”
“Mhm. But people like Dick Roman doesn’t fall into that category. They take those second chances and use them to destroy other people's lives for a profit.”

“Yeah, no shit. Maybe that’s why his lawyer refused to represent him further after the verdict,” Dean scowls, looking disgusted.

Lucifer’s heart is racing. He feels seen. Somebody sees him and understands his reasoning. He’d been outraged when Roman declared he was going to counter sue. He refused to represent him and forbade anyone on his firm to represent the horrible excuse for a man. “I like you, Dean. Can I keep you?” he asks jokingly, instantly regretting it. He doesn’t mean it in a flirty way. He just want to spend some more time with the man that reminds him so much of his best friend.

Dean smiles mischievously. “Dude. I’ve been trying to figure out a way to ask for your phone number without sounding like I came on to you since you told me you were a LARPer. You wanna go grab a beer after work tonight? Cas is working late and I’d be bored shitless just hanging at home waiting for him.”

Lucifer finds himself agreeing. They exchange phone numbers and set up a time and place before they part to go back to work. Luci doesn’t know what to make of this meeting. He is not good at making friends but Dean’s openness and unjudging friendliness had made him far less defensive than he usually is. The fact that the man had defended him also made him feel slightly vulnerable. First against the bitch complaining about the birds, and then unwittingly, about the whole Dick Roman thing. And Dean had proved to be very perceptive. Noting details about him that others didn’t see. Still, Luci thought he had it wrong. There was nothing sweet about him. But he’d really like to hang out with the guy just to get one more moment with somebody who didn’t loathe him on sight. Who saw him as a good guy and called him sweet. He wanted to enjoy that perk while it lasted.

He is still ruminating on this by his desk when Bela announced his next client meeting is incoming. He tells her to send him in and gets to his feet. The client smiles widely and clasps his hand. “Hey. How’s your cat doing?”

Oh, right. This is the guy Lucy had sent an email to when she laid down, Lucifer remembers.

“Using me as a scratching board. But what can you do? They rule the world and they know it,” Luci shrugs and smiles self-deprecatingly. “How’s the dog? Any recent mud baths?”

That gets the client talking about ‘Buddy’ and they spend most of of the meeting swapping pet stories, which is weird for Luci and far from professional. But since the client seems more interested in talking about his new dog (and it is more fun than discussing business transactions) he obliges. The client ends the meeting by asking Luci and his firm to take over all his legal dealings and giving them his full confidence to handle his business without asking for a green light at every corner. Luci is more than happy to do so. This guy is one of the ‘good guys’ in his book and he doesn’t have to battle his conscious on this account.

The day seems to breeze past. He works on autopilot while his mind is occupied with thoughts of Dean and Winchester. Bela dumps a folder big as a phone book on his desk before he goes home. “Here you go, Sir. The Winchester file. I deserve a reward for this.” She looks very self-satisfied.

“If it’s good, you will get one,” he promises.

“Oh, it’s good alright. So make it expensive,” she says with a wink and a smirk. “I’m clocking out now, Sir. Have a good night.”

At least I know what she’s after. All about the money. Not that he blames her. Plus it’s good for him to know what motivates those who work for him. Not everyone is motivated by riches. Some
want fame, security, to prove themselves to others or themselves. They all have different reasons and if you want their best performances you need to know these things.

He is left staring at the big folder for a moment, itching to read it. But if he starts now he’ll be here all night and he’ll miss out on beers with Dean. He puts it in his bag and takes it with him unopened.

Lucifer stops by at Gabe’s for coffee on his way home. The short owner is in place behind the counter. “Heya, Luci! I was beginning to think you had ditched me since my employees can’t behave themselves when I’m away,” Gabe says, throwing an evil eye at Balt slinking out of his way when he speaks, before smiling at Luci again.

Luci scoffs. “Best coffee in the state. Wild horses couldn’t keep me away for long. What was Winchester doing here anyway?” That was the reason he stopped by today. He was burning to know more about the tall man who sent his heart aflutter.

“Oh, you know him?” Gabe says when he starts making one of his random specials for Luci without asking. Gabe knows him well. His usual in the mornings and anything creative in the evenings. “He’s my soon to be brother-in-law. I had to fly out to look at a new place. I’m thinking of expanding. The Samsquatch was kind enough to fill in for me.”

Luci doesn’t note the mispronunciation of Sasquatch. “Expanding, huh?”

“Yes. I figured, it’s going so well over here, why not try my luck at something bigger? Speaking of, you mind handling the paperwork? I’ll pay you this time.”

“Why not ask your brother-in-law?”

“I would, but truth is he’s so ridiculously overworked that I don’t dare. He’s the nicest puppy in the pound. Can’t say no. Wouldn’t be fair.”

“I’ll do it then. I’m fine with the same arrangement as last time. Just send the papers over and I’ll take a look,” Lucifer says with a dismissive gesture, wanting to get back to the more interesting topic. When Gabe opened the coffee shop he had run into some legal issues. Luci had offered to handle it in return for free coffee and any baked goods he felt like for six months. As far as Luci saw it it was a win-win situation because Gabe really did serve the best coffee in the state and his desserts were to kill for. “So have you known Winchester for long?” he probes.

Gabe grins. “A couple of years. I had a major crush on him before I met my wife. He’s the one that got away.”

“They can’t all swing that way, Gabe.”

“But he does! He swings whichever way. I hear he has a thing for blondes. You interested?” Gabe waggles his eyebrows at him suggestively. Luci can feel his cheeks heating up and scowls, making Gabe laugh. “Just kidding. Here you go. And thanks. I’ll have the paperwork sent over tomorrow.”

“No problem. Take care,” he says and waves good bye.

“You too, Luci boy!”

Gabe can be a teasing little shit and is more often than not up to no good, but in a good way. Luci likes him. If Luci was so inclined, he wouldn’t have minded hanging out with Gabe privately sometime. But Luci doesn’t really know how to take a relationship from acquaintance to friend-
status unless the other person took the lead. Instead he settled for stopping by and trade chit-chat with the short man ever so often. It more or less filled up his quota for how much friendly interaction he needed anyway. He liked being by himself. This way he didn’t need to worry about being hurt either.

He dumps the Winchester folder on his bed, takes a quick shower, and looks into his closet, deliberating what to wear. In the end he settles for what he’s the most comfortable in, a pair of faded blue jeans and a simple navy tee with an old school batman logo print. He changes his mind and takes out his dark green tee in stead. “Oh, for crying out loud. It’s a T-shirt! Get a grip on yourself,” he chides himself and stuffs the green tee back, happy that Lucy is not here to silently judge him. He’s nervous. He doesn’t get asked out for beers by nice fire inspectors (or other nice people for that matter) very often. He gets asked out for a round of golf, or to attend fancy social affairs by sly people who wants something from him or who’s trying to get at him somehow. He lays down on the bed, grabs his phone and makes a call that as expected goes straight to voicemail.

“Hi Charlie. It’s been too long and I miss you like crazy. You’re a computer wiz, why’d you have to choose a location with no internet?” He rubs a tired hand over his face, feeling the sorrow of missing his best friend deep in his bones. “I need you to be here. I think I’m heading straight for a new Lilith situation. This guy… he’s so beautiful I hardly know how to breathe when he’s close, but he hates my guts.” He sighs. “Dammit, Charlene. Where are you?” Another pause. “Also, I met someone who reminds me of you. He asked me out for beers tonight. He’s a LARPPer too. I bet you’d like him. I do. I’m afraid I’m going to mess this up. You know how bad I am at making friends… I’ve got to go now. Wish me luck.” He hangs up and rests the phone on his chest. He doesn’t even know if the phone number is still active, if Charlie ever gets his messages. He leaves them anyway when he misses her the most.

Sam’s totally beat when he comes home. Tired in every fibre of his body. It feels like he hasn’t slept for ages. He feels like a failure. Nevermind that he’s done a great job on every other case he’s been working on, not just today, but since he moved in here. He is going to fail Jo’s case. He’d called her and explained the matter, urging her to change defense. “Please don’t drop me, Sam. It doesn’t matter if we lose. I’m going to lose either way. I’d rather have someone in my corner who I know care about me. If nothing else for moral support when the verdict comes.” How could he say no to that? He couldn’t. He hadn’t told her that the opposition was the man he was crushing on (okay, it is a crush. So sue him.), just that it was the Sucrocorp lawyer. Jo had heard enough of Sam’s rants about the case to know they were screwed. He hadn’t told her he’d fucked up by going off on Alighieri in the elevator, or saying no to lunch.

He falls face first into his couch, feet sticking out over the armrest. He scrapes his shoes off and lets them fall to the floor. One of his arms is squished at an awkward angle under his stomach, the other dangles off the couch. Friggin Lucifer Alighieri. Lucifer. Could anyone really be named Lucifer? His parents must have hated him if that was true. No wonder he went by Nick. Part of Sam wanted to scream excitedly about meeting the man out of pure fanboy reasons. Nevermind who he had defended, the man’s skills were legendary. There had been a camera ban on the Sucrocorp trial and Lucifer was notoriously camera shy. Sam had not been able to find a single picture of the man online during the trial. If he had he’d probably have approached the guy straight away when he saw him save that woman, bolstered by having a reason to talk to him. Instead he just kept messing up. There was no salvation for this.

Sam makes a whiny noise and squeezes his eyes shut. He feels so extremely lonely right now. He feels like calling Sarah up on the other side of the world and scream at her for leaving him. How could she walk away from him so easily? It isn't fair! He deserves better than that. Instantly his
stomach twists with guilt for being so selfish. He is happy for her. He is. Really. She had followed her dream. He wasn't even in love with her, as he had discovered when she left. He didn't really miss her, just the part about being a couple. He is being selfish. Wanting her here so she could hold him while he mourned the fact that he couldn't get somebody else. He is angry at her for leaving him, but for the wrong reason.

He opens his eyes to find Mimi sitting on the living room table staring at him. Judging. "Don't you start," he mutters. He can see she's got her golden name tag back. Mimi is a stupid name anyway. He hadn't had a say in the choosing. He had wanted to call her 'Hunter' after the heroes in his favourite comic books when he was little—the ones about two brothers that Dean used to read to him. She is one, isn't she? Even if she didn't hunt monsters like they had. The name tag means a new message but he's too bloody tired to check it out.

His phone vibrates in his pocket. He awkwardly digs it out without stirring from his face plant position and looks at the screen. It's Dean. For a moment he considers not answering, just wanting to be left alone with his misery. He answers anyway. Dean is excited and cheerful to the point of rudeness, blabbing on about this cool guy he met who feeds birds, LARPs, and whatnot. Sam's not really listening. Bottom line is that Dean is trying to play matchmaker and wants him to come along to meet the guy for a beer. Any other day Sam might have said yes. But he is too sad, too tired, and too hung up on Alighieri. He can hardly flirt with another guy when he can't stop thinking about the man, even if Dean had developed a sixth sense for pinpointing Sam's type. He hangs up and closes his eyes.

He can't believe how fast Lucifer has become such an obsession. In a matter of days he'd gone from a hot guy he spotted on the street, to someone Sam couldn't stop thinking about. Lucifer isn't good looking in the conventional way, like Brady had been. But his looks appeals to Sam. Like, a lot. More each time they see each other. Sam wants to think he's an asshole. But the fact is, that every time Sam had been an asshole to him, he'd responded in a semi-courteous way. Being the bigger man. He'd shown he didn't take Sam's shit by doing what? Stand too close and snark. No ugly name calling, no threats, no nothing. Well. There was that touching in the elevator. But it had been the opposite of unwelcome even if Lucifer didn’t know that.

Sam's eyes stings and his throat constricts. It's all too much.

Shit. I'm crying. Why am I crying? I've got a good life. I have my dream career, a nice house, friends and family who cares. So many have it worse than me. I have no reason, no right to be sad!

Suddenly Mimi jumps onto the couch and curls up to a ball by Sam's shoulder. She purrs and kneads her front paws against him. He pets her gratefully and manages to fight back his selfish tears. It takes a while before he has mustered enough motivation to check her tube. The message is written by hand this time just like his was. The writing is beautiful, making him feel even more like a failure for his sloppy scribble. It’s ironic that the girl throws the law in his face. She is right though. He is responsible for any damage Mimi causes. If his cat acts the same at the girl's place she's bound to have destroyed quite a few items. He’s torn between malicious pleasure and guilt. The latter wins out. Somehow he doubts that someone who buys engraved nametags for somebody else's cat is going to send a bill for a couple of broken glasses. He removes the nametag and gets up to write a new note. He’s too tired to be angry. This time he puts some effort into writing. It’s still nowhere near as beautiful as the girl's script, but at least he doesn’t mix capital letters in haphazardly.

"Mimi is NOT evil."

That's all he writes, lacking energy to do more. Then he feeds Mimi and goes to bed. He doesn’t bother closing the door or removing his clothes. He just crashes onto bed and for once fall asleep
As you can see both these guys have issues. Stupid blind boys being stupid. Can it get better than that? ;)

Oh, also. Take Luci’s advice - don’t feed seagulls by hand. Their beaks are sharp. O.O'
Courtship

Chapter Summary

Dean is such a big nerdy teasing little shit child most of the time that Sam tends to forget how sharp his brain is. He gets a reminder of that when Mimi brings something a little more than a simple note home...

Chapter Notes

Thank you guys so much for commenting. It's very encouraging and helpful. :D

Courtship

Target acquired

Luci doesn’t come home until 2 AM. He is pleasantly buzzed, and surprisingly happy. Dean is just like Charlie. Open, energetic, and easygoing. Luci had found himself talking openly about stuff he’d barely told anyone else. It was hard not to when Dean was gushing over his kid brother. The story of how he lost his own big brother Michael to his father’s demands just kind of blurted out of his mouth before he knew about it. Michael isn’t dead, but he might as well be since he chose to “be a good son” and forsake Luci in favour of keeping his father pleased when Luci refused to fall in line.

“Dude, that could have been me. My little bro was always fighting with dad. One day dad threw him out. I’d always tried to live up to dad’s demands and make him proud. But that was too much. Couldn’t do it without my little bro. So I ran away to join him,” Dean had explained.

Dean had a slightly mean side too. He was a teasing little shit, plus he proved capable of quite nasty remarks if challenged (not by Luci, but others). He was quick to anger and equally quick to calm down once the offending party had been dealt with. Luci liked that. He thought he might have found a possible friend for once. Of course it couldn’t last, but he was going to enjoy this until the bubble popped.

Lucy isn’t home so Lucifer undresses and crawls into bed. The folder is still lying on the bed untouched. Too riled up to sleep yet he grabs it and opens it. The outermost paper is a photoprint out of Winchester. On it there’s a post-it note saying:

“Don’t worry. Nothing in here will come bite you in the ass. Or me for that matter. - Bela
P.S. I like diamonds.”

He arches an eyebrow, intrigued, and sniggers. Bela said she wanted a reward, but diamonds? This better be good.
He looks at the photo for a while. It’s a headshot, the kind you use on company webpages. Winchester is smiling, dimples etched deep, and eyes sparkling. Luci’s stomach does another one of those disconcerting flip flops. He knows what he’s in for. It had been the same with Lilith. Charlie had warned him of her, said she was just using him. But he hadn’t listened. He’d been totally smitten and Lilith had seemed equally in love. Or so he thought. He should have known nobody so beautiful could ever love him. This time around he knew. He knew he was going to hurt. He knew it from the moment his stomach started making flip flops and that burning sensation of want ignited low beneath his ribcage. The want to look, touch, feel, and know. He wanted to know what made Winchester tick, what made him smile. He wanted to be the one who put that smile on his face. Realistically (Charlie would say he was being cynical) that would never happen. Not a real smile. He already knew the guy hated his guts. The greed in Lucifer is stronger than the fear of being hurt in this case.

Luci puts the picture carefully on his nightstand. Later he will frame it. He likes to surrounds himself with visual reminders of his goals. It was long since he had a goal. When he had one he went after it with single minded determination. Like his law degree, owning his own law firm, winning the big impossible cases (there had been a few, Sucrocorp was just the one he was the most famous for). Like Lilith. And now Winchester. He gets up and goes to fetch a bottle of Laphroaig and a tumbler. He pours himself a drink, revelling in the tarry scent, and gets back into bed. He takes a sip and opens the folder again. He nearly chokes on his drink when he reads the next paper.

*It has to be a coincidence. It has to be!*

It’s a birth certificate of “Sam Tristan Winchester”. *Sam.* Surely it can’t be Lucy’s Sam. The very thought is ridiculous. There must be thousands of Sams living in this city. And yet… he had seen Winchester around the neighbourhood while jogging hadn’t he?

His heart has started hammering in his chest. Too buzzed to stop and think he grabs his phone, hurries to the living room and his desk where the first note from Lucy’s collar is still lying. He switches the settings so his own number won’t show up on the caller ID and dials the number on the note. His palms are sweating as he waits for a signal with baited breath. It takes three rings before somebody picks up.

“S’m Winch’ster?” comes the sleep garbled voice over the line.

Lucifer’s heart jumps up to his throat. *It’s him!* For a beat or two Luci can’t get a word out. “Sorry… wrong number,” he chokes out, voice so strained he hardly recognises it.

“‘S okay. ‘Ts 3 AM. Y’ need help?” Sam asks, voice still garbled and confused from being only half-awake.

Luci’s heart clenches. ‘Nicest puppy in the pound’ indeed when his instinctual response to being woken by an unknown caller in the middle of the night is to offer help. It’s stupid to react like this. Sam doesn’t know who he’s offering to help. He wouldn’t if he did. Yet Luci is touched. “No. Thank you. Go back to sleep, Sammy.”

“Kay. G’night,” Sam mumbles, sounding more asleep than awake already.

“Good night.” Lucifer hangs up and makes an odd little sound in the back of his throat. He’s too excited for words. Not that he has someone to talk to now that Lucy isn’t here. But this, this changes everything. Lucy is giving him a way into Sam’s life without Sam knowing who he is. He can show him his personal life without the shadow cast by his public persona. It’s time to stop being a dick and figure out a way to court the man using Lucy as a messenger.
He saves Sam’s number amongst his contacts and goes back to bed. There he takes a swig of the whiskey and crawls back under the blankets before resuming his reading of the folder. Sam is 4 ½ years younger than him. Moved around a lot as a child, sometimes changing schools as often as 5 or 6 times a year and still managed to be a straight A student throughout. He has played soccer and basket and been part of the drama club. Got a full ride to Stanford. Graduated top of his class and was hired by a very prestigious law firm where he worked for less than a year. The file doesn’t say why he quit but Luci knows one of the partners, Uriel. His brother in law, Raphael, works for Luci. Luci will call Uriel tomorrow to see if he remembers Sam and see why he quit (or got fired).

The next part of the folder contains information about Sam’s family. This time Luci does inhale his drink and has a coughing fit. Turns out Sam’s big brother is one ‘Dean Michael Winchester’ currently working as a fire investigator. There’s a photo of him too, proving beyond doubt that it’s the Dean Luci partied with tonight. “Small fucking world,” Luci mutters and then laughs. He can’t tell if he’s laughing out of horror or because it’s funny, and he can’t tell if this is a good thing or a catastrophe.

Dean’s arrest records are included. He’s been caught shoplifting in his teens, but the big bad blob that almost sent him to jail when he was 18 is armed robbery of a convenience store.

Luci puts down the folder and mulls over what he’s learned so far. Gabe had said Sam was his brother-in-law to be. Which means Dean is dating Gabe’s brother. Lucy is Sam’s cat. Dean had told him his brother is single. He had also said Luci was his brother’s type but Luci doesn’t put much stock in that now that he knows it’s Sam and Sam hates him.

He keeps reading. Their mother died in a fire when Sam was 6 months old. Their father is serving a life time sentence for murder in prison. The rest of the folder is print outs of old articles where Sam or Sam and Dean are featured. There’s also a whole bunch of articles Sam has written for the school paper at Stanford. Political stuff about everything from feminism to environmental preservation, and racism. Luci doesn’t sleep at all that night. He stays up reading.

At least now he knows why Curtis called Bela creepy. A whole bunch of the information she has gathered must have been gotten through questionable means. Her post-it makes sense now. And this is indeed worth diamonds.

Days came and went without a new name tag on Mimi's collar. Sam should be happy about it, but he isn't. The last note he wrote had been removed, but went unanswered. Possibly, he’d won. Possibly the mystery note sender had stopped letting Mimi in, or possibly—shit, let's hope not—she'd died or gotten ill.

It got to the point where he started fretting about it. Dean called or came over every day (not an unusual occurrence. Often he brought food too.) to check if he’d gotten a response from "the emo chick". When he hadn't, Dean blamed him for scaring her away by being "a pissy little bitch".

On Saturday Mimi (who Dean now insisted on calling Lucy, because he’s an asshole like that) finally came home with a golden name tag again. Sam inwardly sags with relief, then instantly feels annoyed at being worried. In defiance he refuses to check if there's a new message in the tube when Mimi comes strutting into the living room, beelining for Dean's lap. As usual, Dean and Cas have stopped by for a couple of beers. Sam enjoys their company even if he's reading up on a case and they're just lounging on the couch watching some stupid daytime TV show.

“Hey Sammy, can I borrow your laptop?” Dean asks suddenly.

“Yeah, sure.” Sam pushes the laptop towards Dean without looking up from the file he’s reading
in his place in the armchair. He hears Cas and Dean laugh about something on the computer but pays them no heed.

“No shit. Sammy, your emo girlfriend isn’t a girl. I still think you should marry this guy though,” Dean says, laughter in his voice.

Sam looks up with a puzzled frown. “What? Why? What did the note say?”

Cas hits the spacebar to pause whatever it is they’re watching. His eyes are full of mirth even if his smile is miniscule compared to Dean’s big shit-eating grin. “No note this time. He attached an USB-device to her collar. There’s a movie clip on it in response to your last ripost,” Cas answers, smile growing larger.

“My answer was hardly clever, Cas,” Sam says but his curiosity is piqued now so when Cas scoots closer to Dean and pats the seat beside him. Sam puts his work away and moves over to the couch. “Is there any sound on this vid?”

“Dunno. Wait.” Dean plugs in the small portable speakers and then restarts the video. A black screen opens with “Not evil you say?” while familiar sounds starts playing and Dean utters a “Hell Yeah!” as he recognises the intro to ‘Wish You Were Here’ by Pink Floyd. The Black screen fades into Mimi sitting on a kitchen table at the same time as the first chords of the song ring out. A hand puts down a coffee mug on the table. The cat looks at the mug, then back at the camera. She lifts a paw and slowly puts it on the mug without taking her eyes off the person holding the camera. The interaction is muted apart from the song playing, but as a hand (distinctly male) reaches out and points out at Mimi it’s obvious that a “No,” is spoken. Mimi looks at the camera for a beat, then shoves the mug off the table and starts washing herself. The mug is then filmed, in pieces on the floor.

Sam finds himself laughing along with Cas and Dean, reaching out to pet Mimi in Dean’s lap. Then there’s a succession of stills of Mimi looking smug by a broken flower pot, or a glass, a pic of a broken beer bottle on the floor. Then moving pictures again—Mimi scratching her claws against a jeans clad (barefoot) leg of a sitting man, filmed by the man himself. She digs her claws in and climbs up the leg. Sam winces inwardly. That actually hurts and he’s gotten Mimi to stop doing that by always scooping her up and throwing her away (low to the ground so she wouldn’t hurt herself) anytime she did it so it didn’t pay off.

Next shot Mimi comes in through a cat door with a dead hummingbird in her mouth, looking mighty proud of herself. The cameraman gets up from his vantage point by a desk in the living room and walks to the door, opens it and films the birdfeeders in the garden. Next shot a hand is tapping away at a keyboard and Mimi comes and lies down on top of it, promptly stopping any work from happening. Sam laughs again. He recognises all these little quirks and even if the mystery man had referred to the cat as evil it’s obvious that she’s being well taken cared of. Another set of stills of Mimi curled on top of an open newspaper, sitting in the middle of a book held open for reading while mystery man lay on the couch, Mimi standing on two legs, front feet firmly placed on the middle of the television, looking at the screen and preventing the watcher from seeing anything. Everything, both video bits and photos are point-of-view, so you never see the face of mystery man.

There’s another black screen with the text “And the last but certainly not least…” Then the guy is lying on his back in his bed, blanket riding low on his hips (seemingly naked if the lack of coverage over his hipbones is anything to go by). It's filmed from above and the camera slowly pans upward.

"Hot damn! I’d totally hit that,” Dean exclaims.
Sam throws him a surprised look, expecting Cas to scoff and give him crap, but Cas just squints at the screen and says "Do you think he would join us?" which throws Sam on a loop.

"I dunno, Cas. With all the lip he's given Sammy I don't think he takes orders very well."

Cas just hums and Sam barks out a "Guys. What the hell!" Because seriously. What the hell? It doesn't make sense, or if it does it goes way too far into the territory of holy-shit-I-don't-want-to-know. Sam keeps his eyes peeled on the screen and ignores Dean's snigger. Mystery guy is fit. From the V dipping down under the blankets and up he's all muscle covered by enough body fat to make it interesting. He had a wide happy trail and hair on his chest—a natural blond. Sam starts to get excited. There is something familiar about the guy and soon he is going to find out who he is as the camera is almost by his head and—

Dean and Sam burst out laughing at the same time. Mimi lay flat across the guy’s face, covering the whole of it, smothering him. Cas too is chuckling. "There’s your evil cat, Sam," Cas says with a gummy grin.

"I love this guy! He’s like, here's my assets," Dean gestures at his body. Then his hand goes up to wave in front of his face. "And here's the amount of utter shit I'm willing to put up with for the pleasure of your company. Sam. Seriously. Marry this guy. I want him in the family. That was the best 'date me' advert I've seen." Dean grins brightly with the tip of his tongue sticking out as the last notes of 'Wish You Were Here' fade out and the video ends.

Sam laughs, feeling light. "This is not a dating ad, Dean. But I gotta respond to it somehow." He feels relieved somehow at seeing how Mimi has it in her other... home, he supposes he has to call it since she obviously has chosen to divide her time between Sam and L the mystery man.

"Sure it is. He's decided that he likes you, god knows why considering your bitchy notes. And want to keep you and now he's introduced himself and made a pass at you."

"Oh my god, Dean. Not everyone thinks with their dick," Sam says with a wide grin and an eyeroll. "Hold on a sec, I'm gonna go grab a beer." He chose to forgo alcohol so he could work. But this is fun and technically work could wait a day or two. He hurries to the kitchen, grabs a beer and hurries back. "Alright. What makes you think he's making a pass at me, and why is he a catch," Sam says, deciding to humour Dean on this just to figure out how the hell his brother’s twisted mind works.

"Okay. First off. He's lonely as fuck. Which doesn't say anything about his personality cause, no offence Sammy, but so are you and you’re awesome. That's why he was giving you lip when you wanted to take Lucy from him, right?" Sam lets the name slip. Dean will keep calling Mimi Lucy anyway for no other reason but to tease him. "But instead of stopping her from coming to him you started passing notes. Now if I was that lonely that'd be the highlight of my day."

"Oookay?" Sam says skeptically and sips his beer. It hadn't been for him, even if he got stressed out when he didn’t hear from mystery man.

"Then you made it personal by writing by hand, making him wonder who you were. He answered by hand too, right? Can I see that note?"

Sam can’t help but to quirk his lips in amusement. Dean has gone into that enthusiastic Sherlock mode he did when he played mystery games like Cluedo. Sam wonders if he gets like this at work, investigating fires, too. He digs the handwritten note out of his pocket (yes, he's been carrying it around for some godforsaken self-tormenting reason.) and hands it to Dean.

"This is quite beautiful," Cas remarks.
"Don't I know it," Sam mutters.

"Yeah. He's trying to impress Sam," Dean says, and then with raised eyebrows to Sam "You did respond in handwriting, right? And not just in scribbles?"

"Yeah, but compared to him I write like a friggin fourteen year old. Oh god. What if he thinks I'm fourteen and still making a pass at me. I mean, not that I think he is. But what if?"

Dean grins. "He doesn't. You already told him you're a man. And this guy gets his kicks above the waistline."

Sam scrunches up his face and gestures at Dean. "How do you even know that?"

"Because of the books. Plus, he knows Charlie so he must be a good guy."

"What?"

Dean holds up a finger. "Look." He hits replay on the video. He pauses the kitchen shot of Mimi sitting on the table. Then he starts pointing out stuff in the background. "So this guy may whine like Lucy is a bother, but he spoils her rotten." He points at an open can of very expensive cat food on the counter. "He lives alone." He points at the solitary plate, glass, and sole set of utensils drying by the sink. "He's well settled into his home." He points at the curtains and kitchen ware that can be seen, including magnets and a few notes (too blurred to read) on the refrigerator. He then hits play and pauses again on the still of a smug looking Mimi by the broken flower pot.

Dean points at the out of focus wall behind her. There are framed pictures on it. Dean points at one of those. "See? Charlie." It's way too out of focus to be able to tell more than that the pic is a graduation picture of a redhead doing what to Sam appears to be a victory sign.

"That's not Charlie, Dean. That could be literally anyone! Thousands of people have red hair," Sam protests exasperatedly.

“Nope. That’s Charlie. See here? That’s her ‘Peace out, bitches’ head tilt. And she’s doing the Vulcan salute. Come on! Who else would do that in a graduation pic? It’s Charlie, man. I’m telling ya. And look at that.” Dean points towards another picture on the wall. This one is of the redhead and a blond guy. She’s riding piggyback on him and they look like they’re on their way to topple over forward. A dark reddish blur on each of their faces reveals they’re smiling, but the picture is still too out of focus to discern any actual facial features. “She had long hair in college, right? This one’s taken more recently, after she cut it short. So this is just before she left for her around the world trip. Judging by the body type on the man in the bed and this,” he taps the screen on the blond guy, “I’d say this is our guy. It makes sense. She did say her two best friends were guys, right? Me and some other dude. This is him. I bet you 500 bucks that, this. is. him.” Dean looks so friggin proud of himself when he says it.

Sam laughs. It’s absurd! There’s no way in hell he’s going to believe it’s Charlie in those pictures. Dean’s delusional! “And what’s his name?"

Dean shakes his head. “I dunno. Charlie only described him ‘like a thorny cinnamon roll, too precious for this world’.”

Cas, who’ve been following the exchange with silent interest, speaks up. “What about the books? What else can you tell us about him?”

“Right, right.” Dean hits play again and pauses the screen on the shot where Mimi is climbing mystery man’s leg. The man is holding the camera out and angling it down to shoot Mimi from
behind when she climbs. That makes it possible to see what’s behind the office chair he’s sitting on. Bookshelves. How on earth Dean has noted all these things is beyond Sam. He knows his brother is smart and all, but it’s easy to forget how sharp he is due to his behaviour, which, frankly, can be quite infantile. Dean points at the bookshelves. “Look at this. So he’s got all kinds of books. _The Feminine Mystique, Mein Kampf, Anne Frank’s Diary, The Republic, Uncle Tom’s cabin, The Prince, On Liberty, Why We Can't Wait, The Bible, Ching, The Quran, Things Fall Apart, The Alchemist, Grimm’s Fairy tales, War and Peace, Harry Potter, The Iliad, First Blood,”_ Dean rattles off. “And those are just the ones we can see. And they are worn with those marker things sticking out. This guy reads to get his mind stimulated. He thinks about what he reads and will read it no matter if it’s considered wrong or not or he wouldn’t have Mein Kampf.”

“He could just be some crazy nazi,” Sam argues, but he doesn’t believe it. It just has to be said.

Dean snorts. “With Anne Frank’s Diary and Martin Luther King’s ‘Why we can’t wait’ in his bookshelves? Pfft. Yeah right. No this guy likes to educate himself and see all sides of a story before he makes his mind up. He’s a brainy type just like yourself.”

“He could just collect famous literature,” Cas suggests.

“Nope. Then he would have gone for first editions and kept his books pristine. These are all for reading.”

Cas hums and nods his agreement.

“Okay. I’ll buy that,” Sam says and takes a swig of his beer. He feels kind of giddy. Dean’s excitement is contagious and this is such a break from his normal dull life, where nothing except for catastrophes breaks the monotony. It also feels like something that was taken from him has been given back. Mimi wandering off and choosing someone else to give her time to had felt like a rejection even if he tried not to acknowledge it. But with this little video he suddenly got to share the part of her life that had been hidden from him. Even if everything Dean said was complete and utter bull, it was still comforting in some way. “What else?” he urges.

Dean grins and hits play, then pauses when Mimi comes in through the cat door. “Here’s the money shot. He lives in your neighbourhood, but not on your street or I would have recognised the roses.”

“What roses?” Sam asks.

“I’ll show you soon,” Dean says and winks. “All these houses have the same layout and this is shot from his desk,” Dean turns around and points at the far corner of the room behind them, “over there. He’s got bookcases behind him and the TV in the same place as you so he can watch TV while he’s at his desk. He only has a sofa, no armchairs so he doesn’t entertain guests much. He’s well off, ’cause every piece of furniture he’s got is the expensive kind, but practical and comfy. Just look at that fucking carpet. It must have cost a goddam fortune, it’s so big. He’s cleanly, but not obsessively so, considering there’s some clutter. He’s knocked down the wall by the door to make it bigger and lighter. And look there by the wall. He’s put up some what’s-his-face Galaxy something from _My Cat From Hell_ cat-highway. Lucy must be fucking ecstatic about it. It even has strings and tassels and stuff to play with. The whole place is very homey and well tended from what we can see.” Dean hits play again and pauses when the door is open and the camera is filming the bird feeders in the front yard. He points at the rose bushes in the background. “Now that’s the roses I’m talking about. He lives in your neighbourhood, but not on your street or I would have recognised the roses.”

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“I’ll show you soon,” Dean says and winks. “All these houses have the same layout and this is shot from his desk,” Dean turns around and points at the far corner of the room behind them, “over there. He’s got bookcases behind him and the TV in the same place as you so he can watch TV while he’s at his desk. He only has a sofa, no armchairs so he doesn’t entertain guests much. He’s well off, ’cause every piece of furniture he’s got is the expensive kind, but practical and comfy. Just look at that fucking carpet. It must have cost a goddam fortune, it’s so big. He’s cleanly, but not obsessively so, considering there’s some clutter. He’s knocked down the wall by the door to make it bigger and lighter. And look there by the wall. He’s put up some what’s-his-face Galaxy something from _My Cat From Hell_ cat-highway. Lucy must be fucking ecstatic about it. It even has strings and tassels and stuff to play with. The whole place is very homey and well tended from what we can see.” Dean hits play again and pauses when the door is open and the camera is filming the bird feeders in the front yard. He points at the rose bushes in the background. “Now that’s the roses I’m talking about. You don’t forget those once you’ve seen ’em. And there’s nobody on this street with roses like that. Plus, I gotta say, it’s a nice touch with the bird feeders directly outside the kitchen window.”

Indeed it is. And the lawn is green and well kept. It must be really nice to sit by the table drinking
morning coffee and look out over that. “I wonder what the garden on his backside looks like.”

“Dunno. There aren’t any shots of that. Now for the come on,” Dean says and lets the video play on to the bed scene. He lets the video play to the end then backs it up again a bit and pauses when the camera is at the lower point of the body, with the blankets riding low. “He’s naked, right? You’re getting that too, right?” Dean looks from Cas to Sam with raised eyebrows to get confirmation. Both of them nods. “Right. It isn’t exactly subtle. He knows you’re a guy, so for me it seems like he’s telling you he’s into guys and asking if you’re too.”

Sam laughs. “Oh my god, Dean. You’re so overthinking this.”

“Maybe I am. But he’s reinforcing it with his choice of music.” Dean starts singing “...How I wish, how I wish you were here. We’re just two lost souls swimming in a fishbowl, year after year... He’s fucking telling you he’s lonely and bored shitless with his life as it is right now, and asking you to make it better.”

“That’s so fucked up, Dean. He doesn’t even know who I am. Why would he pick me for that?”

“Because, Samantha, you walked straight into his fucking living room along with your cat by sending that sissy note of yours.”

“That makes sense,” Cas says with a decisive nod.

Sam just laughs and shakes his head at them. “Alright. You wanna help me tape an answer?”

“Hell yeah! That’s my boy! ‘Course we do,” Dean exclaims, excited like a child. And honestly? Sam feels the same about this turn of events. Bonus part is he manages not to think of Lucifer Alighieri for the whole day.
Relationship status: It’s Complicated

Chapter Summary

Sam gets to see a new side of Lucifer. Lucifer knows how to pull Sam's triggers. Dean is a good brother. (Sometimes.)

Chapter Notes

There's a few tiny mistakes I missed when I edited this (past tense where it should be present tense and whatever,) but I'm tired now so you'll just have to deal. I'm gonna go take a nap and dream of a world where I have a Beta to help me. *wistful sigh*

Warnings:
GOOGLE TRANSLATE TRANSLATED SPANISH!
Look, I don't know Spanish. I used to take Spanish in school for a year about hundred years ago and have forgotten basically everything. So if you know Spanish and see that it's totally wrong, please tell me. And if you don't know Spanish there's no need to translate because nothing important is said really.

Relationship status: It’s Complicated

Incoming!

Sunday comes around and Sam is up bright and early for his morning run. He feels more rested than he has in days and he really had fun yesterday. There was a small nugget of guilt or stress in the back of his mind that told him he should have been working, but for once he ignores it. Mystery man has given him a much needed break. And listening to Dean’s wild theories about the man was both a bit thrilling and hilarious at the same time. He still doesn’t buy for a minute that it had been Charlie on those photos but he is looking forward to see mystery man’s reply. Mimi was still lounging at home when he left so he’d have to wait. He couldn’t exactly throw her out and tell her to go home to mystery man.

Sam loves running in the mornings. It let him clear his mind for a while and not think of very much. It’s a blessed little blip in time where he isn’t fretting about work, his lovelife, economy, or anything else. There is just the beat of his feet on the pavement, his breathing, and the strain on his muscles. Today he had zig zagged through his neighbourhood, going up one street and down another in search of the roses. Looking at house upon house, all looking more or less the same from the outside. He’d stopped after jogging down the third street, beginning to feel stalkerish. Of course he wants to know where mystery guy lives, but what is he going to do if he found the house? Peer inside through the windows? Knock, and have a little chitchat? Unless he knows what he is supposed to say to the guy he might as well remain oblivious to where he lives.

Sam has worked up a good sweat by now, running in the very fringe of the city, on his way to the
rocky slopes and hills that constitutes as nature in these parts. He hears someone else come running behind him, fast, by the sound of it. Sure enough, the other runner catches up and runs past him just at the beginning of a hill. Black pants, brown tee, one of those belts with small water bottles around his waist, and an Ipod strapped to his arm, the other runner throws a look over his shoulder at Sam and smirks. Sam’s heart stutters. It’s Alighieri. He doesn’t slow, just winks at Sam and keeps running.

It isn’t really a conscious decision that has Sam speeding up to catch up, but Lucifer is fast, cresting the hill long before Sam. When he gets there he can see Lucifer jogging at a more sedate pace on the winding path below. Now determined to catch up, Sam keeps the faster pace, but Lucifer speeds up again and disappears behind a bend. Next time he comes into view he’s jogging.

*Great. Guy’s doing intervals.*

It doesn’t matter. He’s going to talk to him. Apologise. Be civilised adults. Try not to think indecent thoughts about him and stutter like a fool. Whatever. Sam isn’t keen on examining his motives right now. Sam’s lungs are burning once he finally manages to catch up and slow to a jog beside the older man. Lucifer turns his head and looks at him. His hair is matted with sweat and his face is red, just like Sam must look, but he doesn’t seem very winded. “Took you long enough,” Lucifer says, lips curved into an arrogant smirk. Their feet beating the ground in unison. Sam opens his mouth to answer him but Lucifer taps his earbud. “Can’t hear you, Winchester.”

*What the hell? That’s just rude. Really, infuriatingly rude. Sam feels his face draw into a bitchface.*

“Think you can keep up, Adonis?”

Sam scowls at him.

“No?” Lucifer raises an eyebrow. “A shame,” he says mockingly. Then he’s off again and Sam is fuming. The arrogant bastard!

*Game on, asshole!*

Fuelled by anger Sam takes up the chase. This is a typical Dean-move to pull. Goading him by insinuating that he can’t do something, and few things annoy Sam as much as being told he can’t pull something off. Lucifer is really fast when he sprints and it’s all Sam can do not to lose sight of him. He veers off to the left onto a path Sam has never run before. It’s a really bad idea to follow. Or so Sam would have thought if he actually stopped to think about it, which he doesn’t. Sam catches up again once Lucifer slows to a jog. At least now Lucifer looks a bit out of breath when he turns his head. The blinding smile catches Sam off guard. His eyes are radiating playful mischief, making Sam’s stomach fluttery to his own aggravation. His annoyance increased tenfold when Lucifer speaks. “Little slow for someone with legs as long as yours, huh, Winchester?”

“Dude—”

“Nu-uh-uh. Still can’t hear you,” Lucifer says and taps his earbud again, then sniggers at Sam’s affronted look. They’ve fallen into perfect rhythm again, feet beating the dusty red dirt at the same time. Sam almost stops and turns back, but he hadn’t looked where they were going at all while running, too focused on catching up, and he knew enough that they’d taken turns where the path forked a couple of times. He’d be lost now that they’re in hilly nature rather than beating the pavement. Lucifer’s hand shoots out to smack him lightly on the shoulder. “Come on, Endymion. One last push.” And then he’s off sprinting again. Sam is hot on his heels, determined not to let the asshole win. For a while he manages to keep up, but then the terrain is getting steeper as they shoot uphill and Sam’s legs are nothing but jelly. Lucifer’s lead grows steadily until he crests the
hill and disappears out of sight. The climb is hell. Literally hell. Sam’s lungs are burning, his muscles are screaming in protest, and the morning is getting really hot as the sun climbs higher.

*This was a stupid idea. I’m an idiot. If I don’t die of exhaustion I’ll die of heat exhaustion. I’ll deserve it. At least I won’t be alive to let him humiliate me in court. I’ll die of humiliation lost here on a hillside and nobody will know what made me such an idiot. That’s an upside. Good job, Winchester. Why am I doing this anyway? Because I don’t want him to think he’s better than me. Which he obviously is. Fuck. He’s older than me, I should be able to keep up. Being outsmarted by him is one thing but this is pathetic. I’m pathetic. Dean is going to have a field day with this when he hears about it. Maybe I just shouldn’t tell him about it for once. No I deserve his teasing as punishment for being a hot-headed moron.*

He crests the hill and finally sees civilisation again, not so far below. The relief he feels is substantial. There is one of those outdoor gyms, built out of wood, at the foot of the hill and that’s where Lucifer is. He’s leaned forward, resting his hands on his knees. Knowing the torture is over soon makes the trek down easier. He could veer off onto the street and try to figure out where he is. Go home. But he doesn’t. He goes to Lucifer who straightens and gives him a tired smirk when he sees him. “Glad you could make it to the party, Ganymedes,” he says, then reaches up to one of the horizontal bars overhead. Sam doesn’t even bother answering this time, seeing those fucking earbuds still in his ears. He’s still standing bent over, trying to catch his breath. That is, until Lucifer begins doing pull ups.

*Holy shit. How can he still have energy to do that? Friggin show off!*

But what a show! The play of muscles in Lucifer’s chest and arms stretches his tee in a very nice way. If Sam didn’t have any pride he’d sit down and just watch. Instead, he is spurred on, not wanting to be put in place *again*. There are two sets of bars across from each other, thankfully in blessed shadow from a nearby building. So Sam goes to the ones opposite Lucifer and pulls himself up. His muscles strain in protest but now his legs get some rest. He’s not going to let Lucifer win. His own eyes are trained on Lucifer’s body while he pulls himself up and lowers himself down steadily. The print over Lucifer’s chest says “I aim to misbehave”. Sam recognises that T-shirt. Dean has one just like it. It’s a quote from a show Dean used to geek out about with Charlie. Sam wonders if Lucifer bought it because he had watched the show or just because he liked the quote. Probably the latter. The man is friggin solid and Sam wishes that fucking water belt wasn’t preventing the tee from riding up because apparently he is a sick horndog who can’t help perving on Lucifer even while exhausted and trying to outdo him on pull ups just to prove what? Why does he let himself be goaded like this?

*Am I caught in some absurd “Notice me Senpai”-net where I can’t think straight because all he’s seen of me is me making a fool out of myself and all there is left to do is impress him with my physique? I just wish he would look at me and— Oh.*

Lucifer is wavering on his upward pull which made Sam look at his face to see that he is indeed looking at Sam really intently, face straining with the effort of lifting his body weight. He lets go and drops to the ground, bending over again resting his hands on his knees, panting, but not looking away from Sam. He’s looking at Sam in the same way Sam was looking at him. Well. Not the *same* way because Sam was admiring him, not solely for his strength, but for how that strength could be put to use against him in dirty ways. He seriously doubt that’s what going through Lucifer’s head right now as he follows Sam’s descent and ascent.

*Some part in the back of Sam’s mind decides to remember Lucifer calling him Adonis, Endymion, and Ganymedes, whose common traits were extraordinary beauty. But that’s all wishful thinking—it must have been meant mockingly. It must have been. Sam’s crush is just getting the better of him. Sam does a couple of more pull ups. He won this round. Always something. Then*
he lets go and drops to his feet, bending over and panting in exertion. Now he really feels how brutally he has pushed his body beyond it's usual limits. Screw pride. He allows his legs to finally give way and buckle, taking large gulps of air and closes his eyes.

Lucifer pulls his earplugs out and fishes two of those small water bottles out of his belt. “That’s some impressive upper body strength you’ve got there, Winchester,” he pants and takes a couple of steps closer, holding out one of the bottles as he sinks to his knees in front of Sam, but Sam doesn’t see it, he only hears the man’s proximity.

Sam is still hanging his head, trying to get enough oxygen to his brain. He chokes out a self-deprecating "Fuck me," more to himself than anything. Since he didn’t see Lucifer pull his earplugs out he's startled when he answers.

"That can be arranged. But you've got to give me a moment to recuperate first. I'm not as young as I used to be."

Sam's head snaps up to find a water bottle held in front of his nose. Surprised, but gratefully, he takes it. He studies Lucifer for a beat before what he said clicks in Sam’s exhausted mind causing him to laugh. “Fuck you,” he answers with a grin and drinks the water. It’s not cold but it feels like the best thing ever, like drinking when you’re parched or eating when you’re starving always does.

Lucifer look of intense satisfaction flickers over his features and he quirks a smile. “Renegotiating the terms already, or purely habitually?”

Sam snorts another laugh. Too many days caught up in negotiations and renegotiations goes by in their line of work. He doesn’t answer as he’s sure he’d say something about wanting to do both and then it’d show on his face that unlike Lucifer, he isn’t joking.

“Now hold still, I’m going to pour water over your head,” Lucifer orders. Orders. Sam opens his mouth to protest, but Lucifer snaps his fingers in front of his nose and barks a sharp “Still,” with such demand that Sam’s mind comes to a screeching halt. Then there’s water pouring over his head while a hand keeps his hair away from his forehead and it’s such a pleasure that any affront he’d taken at being ordered dies. The water may not be cold, but it’s cool compared to his skin and it does wonders to cool him off. A noise of appreciation escapes him and he is suddenly very aware that Lucifer is touching him. The man seems to have no concept of what is decent to do to a stranger. No wonder really. Sam can hardly be the only one fawning over him. The man has it all—power, fame, money, skill, and a great body. Who would say no to him? Still, he could have just handed Sam the water and told him to pour it. Not that Sam is going to complain. He feels the loss of the hand on his forehead when it’s removed. The empty water bottle in his hand is removed and exchanged for a full one. First then does Lucifer drink himself and pours water over his own head before flopping down to lay down beside where Sam is still on all fours. He has his eyes closed, chest rising and falling visibly as his breathing is slowly evening out. He’s strange, acting like they are much more familiar with each other than they are. Sam switches position so he’s lying down beside him and swallows down the rest of the water he’d been offered.

“How’d you get to be so goddam fast? That was… impressive,” Sam asks at last.

“Oh you know,” Lucifer answers without opening his eyes. “You get chased by enough angry mobs with pitchforks wanting to throw you ‘back in the cage’, you quickly learn the importance of speed and stamina.”

Sam snorts at the devil reference. “You could just change your name.”

Lucifer cracks an eye open to look at him for a beat before closing it again.
“My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,  
Because it is an enemy to thee;  
Had I it written, I would tear the word,” he quotes from Romeo and Juliet, voice full of bitter sarcasm. Sam feels a stab of shame in his gut at that. He still has trouble wrapping his head around that Lucifer is the man’s birth name, and not something he has chosen for himself. He doesn’t answer, doesn’t know what to say.

In the wake of Sam’s silence Lucifer speaks up again. “Do you feel comfortable when strangers dictate sudden name changes on your behalf, Winchester?”

Mimi instantly comes to mind. Not that he didn’t think Lucy suited her marginally better (and Dean kept using that name all the time) but no. He doesn’t like that. “I guess not.”

“I rest my case.”

So Sam is an asshole. Again. If he thinks about it, it’s cruel and unfair to give Lucifer grief about his name. He should apologise. But there’s too much to apologise for. As much as he wants to, if he starts apologising now he’d have to grovel in a way that would put the two of them on too unequal footing once Jo’s case comes up. Sam might not stand much of a chance, but if he grovels now he’ll be squished for sure. “Look. About the Harvelle case—”

“Nu-uh.” Lucifer rolls onto his side and puts a finger against Sam’s mouth, half leaning over him, face so friggin close, and Sam’s world jolts into butterflies and rapid heartbeats all over. It’s a goddam good thing he is already lying down because if his legs were jelly before there’s no way they’d be able to keep him up now. “No work talk now, Winchester. I value my free time too much.” He pauses without removing his finger from Sam’s lips, eyes trailing all over Sam’s face and the corner of his lip is quirked upward just the tiniest fraction. Sam can’t function. He’s afraid to move or speak because that may make Lucifer lean away again. He’s acutely aware where his side and arm is pressed against Lucifer’s chest and stomach. They’re both wet and sweaty which should be gross but it isn’t. In fact, he doesn’t mind the thought of being drenched in sweat and this close but with a whole lot of less clothing and shit, Winchester stop thinking these thoughts, he’s trying to intimidate you! Well, it’s working but for all the wrong reasons. Lucifer’s scent, even sharp with fresh sweat is very pleasant to Sam and he thanks his lucky star for being both exhausted and well past the age of teenage hormones going rampant or he’d be sporting a very awkward and conspicuous boner by now. This close he can hear the music spilling out of the earbuds hanging loose around Lucifer’s neck. He hears the last notes of Led Zeppelin’s Ramble On fade out and the intro to Thunderstruck by AC/DC start.

And yeah. That’s pretty much how he feels right now. Thunderstruck.

Lucifer licks his lips. “After all, Winchester, when you’re up on such a mighty fine looking high horse as I am, you’ve got to ride it,” he says, eyes flashing with that predatory gleam again—just like it had back when he cornered Sam against the car—but his voice sounds somewhat off, strained. Then he rolls off Sam to lay on his back like he just hadn’t fried every working part of Sam’s brain and filled it with dirty thoughts and wants instead along with a billion butterflies and thrills all over. He is so screwed. So so very screwed. He hasn’t been so lost on someone since Jess blew him out of the sky at first meeting all those years ago. No wonder Lucifer sounded strained though, intimidating or not, he must have found Sam’s sweat drenched state disgusting.

Sam really wants to come with some witty comeback at getting his own words thrown at him but he can’t. He doesn’t trust himself not to say something stupid if he engages in banter right now. He turns his head and looks at Lucifer who lies with his eyes closed and the leg closest to Sam drawn up. How the hell did he end up like this? So blown away by a man he doesn’t know. He knows about him. Ruthless, proud, powerful. Skilled beyond belief but also notoriously private. Still today there wasn’t a single picture of him available on the internet. The things the media had
to say about him during the Sucrocorp trial was all bad and frankly cruel, so Lucifer had good
cause not to want to be recognised. There had been numerous death threats to his person. Sam
soaks in every little nugget of information about who Lucifer is in private as if it’s purest gold.
How he seems to prefer semi shabby clothes when he’s free and doesn’t bother fixing his hair.
That he runs (fast!) outdoors and that his hands are more akin to those of a blue collar in their
roughness. Sam likes that. He likes his women soft and petite and his men big, rough, and with an
edge of danger about them (Gabe being an exception, but he had another type of bad boy vibe
with his total disregard for rules). Brady had been a bit like that too. He’d been smart and educated
but ultimately something of a bad boy with a golden heart (at least where Sam was concerned) and
shit for judgement calls. Still, Brady hadn’t affected him even slightly as much as Lucifer did.

Straining his hearing Sam picks up when Thunderstruck fades into Child In Time by Deep Purple.
Okay. So apparently you could switch out Lucifer’s music collection for Dean’s and neither
would notice. Just throw in some Pink Floyd, Roger Waters, maybe some Uriah Heep and we’re
good to go.

It isn’t until Child In Time fades into Tide is Turning by Roger Waters that Sam realises how long
he’s been staring at the man. Just staring, memorising every line of him, fighting the urge to get
closer. The song must be ten minutes or something. Embarrassed, he clears his throat awkwardly
and looks around. The gym is well equipped with a great deal of simple mostly wooden fitness
machinery and fixtures. “This is a really nice place. Where are we anyway?” he asks and sits up.

Lucifer opens his eyes and looks at him. “You’ve never been here?” Sam shakes his head and
Lucifer sits up next to him. “Sunshine Hill,” he answers. “It was supposed to become a gated
community, but they ran out of money halfway through building it. Then they had the bright idea
to set the half-finished apartment complex on fire to get the insurance money for it.” Lucifer makes
a disgusted face. “Only thing was, they decided to do it while a group of workers was still inside,
hoping to get away with not paying their wages since most of them were Mexicans without a
work permit. Two dead and five more of them were seriously injured.”

"Jesus Christ. How come I've never heard of it?" Something like that should have brought
massive media coverage.

"Political shutdown. When the right wrong people are involved, things like that fly under the
radar."

"How do you know this? Did you defend them?" the question is out of his mouth and Sam
instantly regrets it. Cold anger turns Lucifer’s face into a hard mask and makes his eyes into
burning ice.

"I have to do something to earn my Satan title, don't I? Glad to know you hold me in such high
regards, Winchester," he says, voice dripping of venom. Then he looks away and for a moment
there’s a flicker of hurt in his face. When he continues talking, apart from stiffness in his shoulders,
there's no longer any hints of either vitriol or hurt. "Anyway, a foundation bought the property and
turned it into this. A community for the workers and their families. Low level rent apartments, a
free health clinic, and free access to all the things originally built. This gym, there's a pool on the
other side of that building, a tennis and a basket court, and a communal garden if you walk that
way," he says and points down the road.

“That’s great,” Sam says with a smile. “Proves there are good people out there.”

Lucifer hums dismissively. “Come on, Winchester.” He gets to his feet and dusts himself off. “We
need to stretch now or we won’t be able to walk tomorrow.” He holds his hand out for Sam and
grasps his wrist when Sam takes the offered help. Lucifer bends his knees and leans backwards as
Sam heaves himself up, Lucifer pulling by straightening his legs thus causing leverage. It causes

them to end up chest to chest, Lucifer steadying Sam with a hand on his hip before letting go and stepping away. Sam mumbles a thanks and tries to keep his jelly legs steady as another wave of butterflies hits at the abrupt contact. Lucifer just nods but doesn’t look at him, probably uncomfortable at contact he wasn’t in control of.

They stretch in silence. It’s odd how comfortable the silence between them is, despite its awkwardness. It’s not that Sam doesn’t want to talk, but Jo’s case is like a giant wall between them that Sam can’t climb without feeling like a traitor. He finally comes up with something to say that is neutral enough not to insult the other man or sound like he’s awkwardly crushing on him. It’s thirst that has him talking. “This gym is great an’ all. But it’s a shame they don’t have a drinking fountain or a shower or something.”

“I hadn’t thought of that,” Lucifer says thoughtfully and straightens. “That should have been obvious. Hmm.” He looks around the gym for a while, like he’s envisioning the addition, then turns towards Sam with a little satisfied smile. “Good observation, Winchester. I’ll see what can be done about it.” He collects his empty water bottles and puts them back in his belt then motions Sam to follow. “Come on.”

Sam, like an obedient little puppy, trails after him. What else can he do? He’s lost here anyway and Lucifer isn’t. More importantly, he’s curious. Lucifer keeps acting like it’s totally natural that Sam will take his directions which irks Sam to no end, but he also does it in a way that makes it feel like they’re not strangers at all and that makes it easy.

Shit, I’d trail after him all day if I could get away with it with my pride intact.

Lucifer leads him across the street to a closed hole in the wall store. He raps on the glass of the counter window and waits. It doesn’t take long before it’s opened by a hispanic man in his fifties, that breaks out in a big smile when he sees Lucifer. “Ah, señor Luke! ¡Me alegro de verte! ¿Como estas?” the man asks.

Lucifer gives him a smile back. “Bien, gracias. Todo bien con la familia?”

“Sí Sí. Juan hizo el equipo de baloncesto y Angela ha empezado a hacer bien en la escuela, finalmente.”

“Eso es muy bueno escuchar, Eduardo. Enviar mis saludos a María ¿quieres?”

“Claro. ¿Qué puedo hacer hoy?”

Sam remains silent, trying to follow the polite and familiar conversation with his limited Spanish. Lucifer’s pronunciation is flawless, down to the faint lisping sound. They’re just talking about the man’s family, but still, Sam is impressed and intrigued. The man, Eduardo, called Lucifer ‘Luke’. Not Nick. Sam has about a million questions he doesn’t really dare to ask. He’s pretty sure this is proof that Lucifer wasn’t part of defending the men who had lit the fire or he wouldn’t be welcome in these parts. The magnitude of the insult he’d thrown Lucifer’s way hits him and makes his gut twist in shame. These thoughts distract him enough that he misses the end of the conversation. Eduardo hands Lucifer two bottles, bids him a good day and closes the window again. Lucifer turns towards Sam and hands him a sports recovery drink. “Thanks,” Sam says gratefully and smiles, feeling stupidly shy which probably reflects in his smile. He feels heat creep up his cheeks. He has no control over it whatsoever. It’s sweet, Lucifer’s thoughtfulness. He has no reason to be kind to Sam since Sam just keeps being an asshole to him, and yet he’d given Sam water first before drinking himself when they got to the gym. And now this. An offhanded comment about a lacking water source in the gym and instantly the man had seen to his needs.

Lucifer’s lips twitch in amusement as he drinks and watches Sam do the same. The blush must
have been just as obvious as it felt. *Fuck.* When they’ve drained the bottles Lucifer tilts his head and studies Sam with an unreadable expression for a moment then seems to come to some sort of conclusion. “So… Winchester. If you…” He trails off and looks away, rubs a hand over his neck in a gesture that seems nervous and sends Sam’s heart into speeding up. Why _would he be nervous all the sudden? _Lucifer’s eyes flick to his again, almost shyly before he takes a deep breath and squares himself. “I… So, how about that lu—” Lucifer’s phone rings and he cuts off with an annoyed curse. He holds up a finger as he digs up his phone out of his pocket and Sam lets out a nervous breath he hadn’t been aware he was holding. Is Lucifer trying to ask him to join him for lunch again? But strictly no-business since he values his free time? It almost seemed that way. And he appears nervous. But why would he do that? _Or is it just my wishful thinking getting the better of me again?_

“Yes?” Lucifer answers the phone with a scowl, voice conveying exactly how much dislike he has for being disturbed at this moment. His facial expressions change to one of concern by whatever the caller is saying. "Where? ... I'm on my way." He hangs up and gives Sam a regretful look. "I'm sorry, I have to go.” Lucifer raises his arm and grips Sam’s bicep. “I led you astray to this place. Do you want me to pay for a cab home? I'd be happy to do so. It's only fair after all.”

“No, no. It’s fine. I’m fine. It’s alright. Thanks anyway,” Sam babbles with an awkward smile, holding up the hand of the arm Lucifer isn’t touching, afraid he’ll let go if he moves it.

“No? Very well, Mr. Winchester. Have a good day then.” Lucifer seems reluctant to let go, and when he does his fingers trail along the backside of Sam’s arm as his hand fall away, giving Sam goosebumps.

“Yeah. You too.”

And like that, Lucifer is on his way away from him. He hears him call out to a man by a car further down the street. "Hey, José! Necesito que me lleven. ¿Estás libre?"

"Para usted, señor? Siempre," the man answers with a smile and opens the car door for him. Lucifer gets in and throws one last look at Sam before the door closes and the car drives off.

Sam’s heart is beating fast and he has no idea how to interpret any of this. He digs his phone out of his pocket and calls Dean who picks up at fourth ring. “Too early, Sam. M’bttr be important,” he mumbles, voice sleep rough.

“You need to come get me, Dean. I’m lost. Both metaphorically and literally. Alighieri, he.. he…”

“Did he threaten you?” Dean sounds more alert now, protective instinct rising to the occasion due to Sam’s distressed tone.

“No. No I think he was… It’s stupid. I’m just imagining things. But I almost thought he was about to ask me out for a lunch date. I mean, I thought he was trying to intimidate me at first when we lay on the ground together, but—”

“Whoa, whoa. Slow down. I’m on my way. Where are you?” Sam hears Dean fumble on the other side of the line, and then the rattling of keys being picked up.

“I don’t know. I’m at this place called Sunshine Hill.”

“Got it. I’ll be there in ten.”

“You know where it is?”

There’s the sound of a door shutting and being locked, then the echo of footsteps on stairs. “Yup.
Put out a nasty fire there a couple of years ago. The bastards who lit it lived to regret it big time.”

“What happened?”

Dean’s outside now, and Sam hears him get into the Impala and shut the car door. “Dunno exactly, but it pissed some high up off and he rained down hell on ’em. ‘S a nice place nowadays isn’t it?”

“Yeah. Lucifer said some foundation bought it and fixed it up for the workers and their families.”

Dean chuckles. “Oh, Lucifer. You’re on first name basis now, huh?” Sam swears he can hear Dean waggle his eyebrows suggestively against the backdrop of the Impala’s engine.

Sam slaps a hand over his eyes. “Shit, Dean. I’m such an idiot. I haven’t even told him my first name yet. I keep fucking this up. I was really mean to him. Accused him of defending the men who was responsible for the fire.”

“Yeah, well. If that was true he didn’t do a good job of it because those guys were lawyered up to the teeth and somebody cut through their defense like butter. I mean, the way I hear it, it was like an avenging angel descended upon them, determined to make them pay.”

“How did you hear that? This wasn’t on the news.”

“No, but the people over there, they’re good people. They treat us firemen like heroes and they don’t forget who helped them. Anytime me or any of the guys who was working that day are in the neighbourhood they talk to us, you know? Trying to give us free stuff or help us out if we need it. If my Spanish wasn’t as limited as it is I could probably tell you more. This is what I know, every single worker who was involved in building that thing ended up with a green card and a citizenship afterwards. The foundation you mentioned, what was it? Aphrodite Ascending? No, doesn’t sound right. But something like that. They turned that place from utter ruins to a flourishing community. They financed a free health clinic since few of the ones who got hurt that day would ever be able to afford the care they needed. Apparently the founder helped with some of the manual labour too, repairing the outdoor gym and fixing up the garden.”

“Do you know his or her name?”

“No. But enough about that. I want to hear what happened this morning for you to call me like a fretting teenager.”

“Okay. Get this. I was out running when…” Sam tells Dean. Despite the very real possibilities of getting teased for the next decade, he tells him everything. It’s cathartic. He hangs up and keeps talking once he gets into the Impala. In the beginning Dean does make fun of him, but at some point in the story (Sam’s not sure when exactly, maybe when he mentioned the print on Lucifer’s shirt or the music on his Ipod?) he narrows his eyes a bit and focuses intently on what Sam says. He stops asking leading questions and just probes for more details. Sam gets the feeling that this is his brother’s true detective mode. Once at Sam’s place the interrogation continues. He has Sam describing Lucifer’s looks in detail, along with repeating every other run in with the man. He has Sam telling him the location of Lucifer's office (What does it’s proximity to any parks has to do with anything?). Sam would be annoyed if it wasn’t so liberating to talk freely about the man who had swallowed up so much of Sam’s thoughts so quickly.

They’re sitting opposite each other at Sam’s kitchen table with a cup of coffee when Dean concludes his interrogation. Sam’s facing Dean head on and Dean is leaning against the wall with his legs stretched out and resting on the third chair by the table. He is kind of muted and thoughtful.
“So what do you think?” Sam urges at last.

“Look, man. Without actually meeting him I can’t tell you if he’s gone on you as you are on him, or if he just wants to fuck your ugly mug into the mattress. But I can tell you for sure that he’s into guys and he’s into you, one way or another.”

Sam ignores the thrill in his gut at hearing that. How on earth would Dean know that anyway? Sam makes a sceptical face. “What makes you think that?”

“What? Apart from him standing really close and touching you every chance he gets?” Dean says with a lopsided grin and a raised eyebrow.

“He’s trying to intimidate me,” Sam insists.

Dean shakes his head. “Nu-uh. At Gabe’s and by his car, yeah, maybe. Probably a bit in the elevator too after you went off on him. But in Sunshine Hill? Nope. Sure, the guy has stepped in close after every fucking insult you’ve thrown his way, I’ll give you that. And it’s a working technique to an extent. One that doesn’t work on you or you would have shirked away from him or become hostile when he did it again and again. Nu-uh, Sammy. The way you described him rolling practically on top of you at the gym had nothing to do with him trying to intimidate you. None. And if you weren’t so fucking smitten by him you would have known that. You’re focusing too much on second guessing yourself and too little on him.”

“But—”

“No, Sam. Tell me, when he was lying on top of you, was his face hard and cold and was he looking you square in the eyes?” Dean asks with an amused smile and sips his coffee.

Sam thinks back, envisioning how Lucifer had looked at him, that tiny quirk of his lip, how his eyes had roamed across his face and caught on his lips. How Lucifer had wet his lips and gotten that predatory gleam in his eyes before rolling off him. Predatory, as in hungry if Dean was right. “Huh.”

“Yeahuh. Dude’s referred to you as three of the most beautiful guys in mythology, he’s showing off physically like some dumb alpha male, he dotes on you what with the water and all, plus he compliments you on your strength. Seriously, Sammy, how can you not see it?” Dean grins. “This is the same guy who got Dick Roman off the hook, right? He’s not the type to take shit lying down. Yet the amount of crap you’ve been pouring over him and he only defends himself with some snide defensive remarks? I mean, come on! The guy has literally told you twice already that he wouldn’t mind boning you.” Dean lifts his fingers and does air quotes as he says “That can be arranged.”

Sam laughs. “And you don’t think he was kidding?”

Dean shrugs. “I think he was kidding in the I’m-kidding-if-you’re-kidding way. I mean, the guy’s interested but he sure as hell ain’t no player or you would already be screwing by now. But then again, you must be sending him mixed signals from hell to decipher, right? Going between nasty insults, being a prissy bitch, and then letting him feel you up, playing along with any innuendo he drops. Guy can’t know up from down with what to do with you,” Dean says and winks.

Sam giggles. Jesus, how old am I? Thirteen?

Dean snorts and gets up to get a refill of coffee. “I’m just gotta warn you, Sam. I’m a fucking master at knowing if someone is open for a roll in the hay. Like I said, I can guarantee that this guy wants you. And who wouldn’t, really? Winchester genes, right? But before you act on that,
be sure you can take it if all he wants is a one-night-stand. Okay? I mean, deep and meaningful relationships wasn’t exactly my gig before Cas, you know?” Dean leans against the counter, crossing his ankles and sips the coffee.

“What? You don’t think I should act on it?”

Dean snorts and smiles lopsided. “No. I think you should act on it either way. And if you want more and he doesn’t seem to, I think you should pursue him anyway until he gets with the program. I’ve wasted so much fucking time in my life shying away from possible relationships, or leaving one-night-stands in the dust when I clicked with them, for fear of getting my heart broken. You know what good that did me? Nothing. Instead I just walked around with constant heartbreak in my chest.” Dean’s face has gone soft and earnest. “I say, better take a chance and be brave. If you get your heart broken, at least it’s for real instead of a self-created cage of loneliness. You mourn, you heal, and you go out and try again.”

“Dude. Are we having a chick-flick moment?” Sam says with an amused quirk to his lip.

“Shut up,” Dean says, mirroring the amused expression. “I’ve learned my lesson, okay? I’m thirty-fucking-five years old. If I want to have a chick-flick moment with my little brother I’m gonna have it. So many of our problems could have been avoided in the past if I’d just been less proud and less scared shitless of opening up and talk about my feelings. And today, when I think about love and sex and all that crap, I think that if you constantly keep yourself locked away trying to avoid getting hurt, you’re constantly hurting anyway. So all you do is keep choosing the devil you know before the devil you don’t.” He snorts a little laugh. “For all you know, the devil you don’t know might turn out to be an archangel.” He raises his eyebrows suggestively towards Sam and fires off a shit-eating grin.

Sam laughs. “Oh my god, Dean. That was so lame!” They’re both grinning and looking down in their coffee for a while. Then Sam says, quietly, “Cas is good for you.”

“Yeah… I know,” Dean answers softly, his features smoothing out to a tranquil happy expression.

And Sam is truly happy for Dean. He has changed so much over the years. One by one the pieces had fallen into place, Cas being a major factor for making the restlessness in Dean’s soul to finally settle. He still retained the core of who he is. Just… more at peace with himself.

Dean’s phone rings and shatters their moment of peace. Dean answers and talks for a while with a serious expression asking questions like “When? Where?” When he hangs up he looks at Sam. “There’s been a dam accident in a town not too far from here. Some of the guys from the station are going there to help. You wanna come along and play good samaritan with me?”

“Of course.”
Friendly Fire Isn't

Chapter Summary

Lucifer's day isn't going very well. People are scum. Pure and simple. And why, why, why must Sam keep hurting him? If only Charlie was home...

Chapter Notes

All right, trying to keep the posting pace up. :) Enjoy another chapter. ^^

Friendly fire isn’t!

Man down! Medic!

“I swore to myself I would never do this again, Charlie! I wouldn’t try to prove myself to people with low opinions of me. Yet when he took for granted that I defended the Sunshine killers, I had to bite my tongue not to go on a rant about it being me who brought them to justice, just so I could fucking impress him. I’m so pathetic. Charlie, come home. I need you. I’m in way over my head. He is perfect. Fucking perfect and I can’t stop myself from touching him. And he lets me. I don’t get that. Why would he let me when he has so much disdain for me? And it gets worse. The guy I told you about, that reminds me of you? I could actually see us be friends and I think you’d like him very much. Guess what? They’re brothers. Come. Home.” Lucifer hangs up. He wonders for the thousandth time if Charlie even get these messages.

Thoughts of this morning has occupied his mind since he left Sam at Sunshine Hill. Not much else to do while driving anyway. The way his heart had leapt in his chest when he spotted Sam ahead of him on his run, it was just pathetic. He’d wondered if Sam had seen the video yet, if he had figured out it was Lucifer. The bed scene was a bit too much perhaps and it had taken eight shots before he got it right. Panning the camera upwards with a cat over his head wasn’t easy. Especially since it was imperative that his hair didn’t stick up. But it probably was too much. So he’s an idiot. He wanted it to shine through that he was interested in Sam in more ways than just simple curiosity. But since Sam didn’t know he knew who he was it was probably just perverted. It had been fun making the video though.

He’d come to the conclusion that Sam either hadn’t seen the video or hadn’t figured out who he was as soon as they got to the gym and started talking. He hadn’t planned on going to Sunshine until Sam got that determined competitive look. And he was fast and resilient. Luci had pushed himself to the max not to lose, the last hill being utter torture. And like some stupid buffoon he had to go and show off some more, hadn’t he? With doing the pull ups. That had paid off well by the way because gods! Sam was so beautiful when he took on the challenge, muscles flexing and tee riding up to expose a tantalizing sliver of skin and happy trail. Every smile, every laugh he’d coaxed out of the younger man was like precious jewels and sent his heart aflutter, every touch zinged like electric current through his body. It was insane! And every time Lucifer touched him
Sam would just go still and let it happen.

But as happy as it made him, and as intoxicating as it was to interact with Sam, it hurt so much more when Sam reminded him what he truly felt for Luci. The disdain he felt about Lucifer’s name, just like everybody else.

*Change you’re name and then we’ll talk. Yeah, right. Fuck you, Winchester! I may not have chosen it myself but it’s my name and I’m gonna fucking own it no matter what the world says.*

When Sam just presumed Luci would defend the Sunshine killers, fuck that hurt. It was like a physical blow with how wounded Luci felt about that assumption. No, not a physical blow. That would have been less painful.

*Does he even realise how much power he holds over me? How badly I want him?*

It had been a major accomplishment not to lash out defensively and say something hurtful right back. An even bigger accomplishment not to assure Sam that no, he didn’t defend them. He brought them to justice and helped create the flourishing community that Sunshine Hill was today. That he’d helped rebuild the outdoor gym that had been way smaller before and had gotten damaged by the fire. That he’d designed the garden outlay himself, showing some of the residents how to maintain and take care of it. Sam is a social justice warrior and Luci wanted to show him some of his own accomplishments on that front, of which Sunshine Hill was one.

But it’s pathetic to try to correct people’s assumptions oneself and that only led them to question his motives, thinking it was some kind of publicity stunt. If Sam was going to change his opinions about Luci he’d have to come to his own conclusions. Showing by doing.

Still, it had felt like Sam was softening up. When Luci handed him the energy drink his smile and body language had been shy and *open*. He had blushed. He’d actually blushed and it sure as hell wasn’t because he felt threatened. Luci’s stomach had been doing elated flip flops and he decided to take a chance, asking the younger man out for a date. Well. A lunch date. Nothing extravagant or anything. There was no mistaking Sam’s body language. (There probably was, all things considered. But still.) He almost lost his nerve.

Pathetic. *I can bring down huge companies and face off with the most powerful people in the country without flinching, but asking a guy to join me for lunch has me unsure and faltering. I’m a fucking moron, that’s what I am. I have absolutely no clue how to go about doing this.*

It’s not like he hadn’t had romances before, even if he hadn’t been so smitten since Lilith. But the thing was that all those times he’d been the one pursued. It had been people wanting something from him, thus approaching him. On top of that he’d had Charlie as a constant, coaching him. What the hell does he know about courting an uninterested partner? Nothing, that’s what.

Missouri Moseley’s call had stopped him from finding out if Sam would have said yes to lunch. She used to be one of his secretaries. A brilliant and warm woman who now ran the Venus Rising Foundation for him full time. Hers was one of the few phone numbers he had set to come through even when he had the block all calls setting switched on during the weekends. So when she calls and tells him there’s been a dam breach and the town her niece lives in got flooded, of course he’s going to hurry there to help. His attempt at bad romance can wait.

Humans may be scum of the earth and deserve every fucking catastrophe the world throws at them, but he’s human too, just as greedy and corrupted as anyone. He’s not going to stand by idly and watch when disaster strikes. At least not every time.
Hours later and Luci is exhausted and full of utter hate for humanity. The day had turned overcast and clammy. The water had swept away houses and carved a broad, deep gorge in the earth like a highway. The water is still coming, but now it’s a slow moving red river rather than a torrent, surrounded by slick muddy walls that made it difficult to get people out of the water. He’d been working for hours, pulling people, pets, and wildlife out of the water just to go back in as soon as he got someone up. There were people on dry land that could handle any injuries and such like. The reason he was so full of hate right now was that when he was working hard trying to get a cow out of the water some idiot had yelled “Leave the cow, there’s still people out there!” to him. Like he fucking cared. This was a man-made disaster and even if the people caught up in it maybe didn’t deserve the tragedy, any animals certainly didn’t. You can’t just look into the big terrified eyes of a cow stuck in the muddy water while debris kept bumping into it, tearing up gashes and hurting it, and tell that cow she didn’t matter. If he’d had a gun at that minute he’d turned around and shot the speaker without losing any sleep over it.

He’d ignored the speaker of course. If he was going to risk life and limb to rescue lives, he is damned well going to dictate who he deemed worthy of such risk. And it was a risk. The footing under water was treacherous and the current pulled around all kinds of debris. He’d acquired a fair amount of bruises, scrapes, and gashes by now. He’d managed to get the cow out of the water. She’d had a halter on and the damned thing had gotten stuck in something under water. Once that was off her it was just a matter of guiding her ashore downstreams. He’d much rather be Dean’s Disney princess than leaving any animals in favour of humans.

He’s submerged to his waist, scanning the stream, rope tied to a tree ashore and around his stomach to anchor him. Seems like most people have been rescued by now. He spots movement against the current in the middle of the stream at it’s deepest point and wades a bit deeper trying to see. It looks like a little girl lying half atop a piece of something plastic. But she seems unconscious so he doesn’t get how she can be moving against the pull of the stream. Then she switches direction and he spots the head of a dog with her shirt in it’s mouth. The dog’s head keeps dipping under but it doesn’t give up.

Luci wades towards them and begins calling out. “Here boy! Come here doggie. Swim this way, I’ll pull you out.” The dog hears him and swims his way but the poor animal must be exhausted and keeps going under, not making much ground. To make things worse the water here is much deeper than it’s been on most places. Luci is submerged to his shoulders and by the end of his rope now, and it looks like the dog isn’t going to make it. He doesn’t even consider how stupid and dangerous it is before he unclasps the rope and swims out the rest of the way to the pair. He gathers up both the dog—it’s a jack russell—and the girl on his chest and swims backwards towards the shore. The moment the dog is secured against his chest, it begins licking the girl's face. She groans but doesn’t wake. A sharp pain jolts Lucifer’s hip as something tumbles against it. He hisses and is rewarded with licks on his face instead. It warms his heart more than he cares to admit but he ignores both dog and pain for now and focusses on getting them ashore. When he’s back by the shallow water he gets to his feet and carries the two instead. There’s a man and a woman yelling by the rope ladder he anchored by the steep wall and he wades over there. The dog keeps whining pitifully as soon as he’s lifted out of the water and Luci makes the mistake of looking down which almost jolts him to a standstill. One of the dog’s back legs is shredded. Literally. There’s bone fragments sticking out on at least three places. He couldn’t put the awe he feels to words if he tried. This little creature had spent all of his energy trying to save ‘his girl’, swimming against the current, with a leg that is absolutely trashed. The pain must be excruciating.

Finally by the ladder he holds up the girl first to the waiting pair happily exclaiming about their daughter. She’s lifted out of there and he holds the dog up for them to take. But they don’t. The woman hurries away with the girl and the man looks about to follow. “The dog,” Luci shouts and the man turns back to him.
“Leave it.”

“What?!”

“It’s just a damned dog. Look, man. I just lost my house and all my belongings. I can’t be expected to take care of a dumb animal.”

The shock of hearing the man say that leaves Luci cold all over and he tucks the dog into his jacket protectively. He could argue but there’s no way he’s going to hand over such a loyal, brave individual to a man who can’t be bothered to care for it. “Get out of my face or you’ll regret it,” Luci snarls, cold rage bubbling up inside. It must show on his face how close he is to murder because the man pales and turns to hurry after his wife and child.

He has to take a couple of deep breaths to calm down and beat the rage into something less explosive. He opens his jacket and looks down on the dog. It’s panting and looking back at him with tired eyes. “Hello. My name is Lucifer. It looks like you’re stuck with me for the rest of your life. ...or at least until you choose someone else you’d rather be with. But let me tell you this little fella. I’m awestruck by you and it’s going to be an honour to take care of you. You got that? I promise you I’ll never abandon you. Now, it’s going to hurt a bit because it’s hard to climb a rope ladder and carry you without putting more pressure on your leg. But I’ll get you medical care asap. I promise.” The dog looks back at him but doesn’t respond. Not that he expected it to. It leans his head so it’s nose is the only thing poking out of Lucifer’s sodden jacket.

The dog whines twice during the climb, but doesn’t stir. Up on dry land Lucifer stands deliberating. Not everyone here are dumb uncaring dickwads like the man he just spoke to. Most people had been just as dedicated to the task of caring for any animals he had rescued as he was. So the question was, walk upstreams to where a couple of paramedics had set up emergency camp, or go to his car and drive straight to a vet. Option number two would take longer before the dog would get the care it needed, but it would get better care.

The man that told him to leave the dog comes running back towards him, but looking out on the water with a huge grin. He doesn’t pay Luci any mind, just climbs down and starts wading out in the water, aiming for what looks like a wooden jewelry box that is stuck in the roots of an upturned tree. Luci snorts, and with a sound close to a growl he kicks at the wooden pegs he’d secured the rope ladder with until the ladder is on the verge of coming loose. Then he turns and heads for where he parked his car.

*I hope you break your neck trying to climb that thing you cold-hearted greedy son of a bitch!*

He rounds a bend where a group of volunteers are standing when he hears someone of them call out. “Hey, I know that asshole. What didja do, Alighieri? Out for a round of golf when the flood hit ya?” Laughter. Of course. “Serves you right, you fucking scum of the earth.” And someone else adds “People like you deserve it!”

Luci throws them a death stare, meaning to walk past them and ignore their taunts, but he almost missteps because there, in their midst, is Sam looking stricken. It’s a fucking stab to the heart and he can’t deal with that right now. He turns on his heel and walks another direction, swallowing around a lump in his throat. He thinks he hears Sam’s voice sounding angry but very pointedly ignores it because he really, really, don't want to hear Sam add to the taunts.

The walk to his car gets a bit longer due to the incident and when he’s almost there another car comes driving to park right behind him. For once it seems to be a good thing because the man who steps out of it has a jacket with the red cross on it. “Hey, medic,” Luci yells and hurries towards him. The man look up at him and waits for him to come closer. “I need help. My dog is hurt,” Luci says when he is close enough, holding up his jacket enough for the man to see the
dog’s head poking out.

“Let me take a look at him and I’ll see what I can do,” the man responds without hesitation.
“Come.” He motions Luci to follow to the back of his car and opens his trunk, spreading a towel on the flat surface and gestures for Luci to put the dog there. Carefully Luci extracts it from it’s safe cocoon by his chest and sets it down. He pets the dog’s head calmly and looks at the medic who’s face crumpled in sympathy at the sight of the shredded leg.

“Oh, you poor little bee. That must hurt so much,” he says and runs a hand over the dog’s flank.”What’s his name?” he asks with a glance at Luci.

Little bee? I like this guy already. Luci’s mind races. A name. The dog is his now so he should name it. He isn’t really creative in that department so the first name to come to mind belongs to the person he misses most but never again will be part of his life. “Mikey. His name is Mikey.”

The medic’s lips curve into a slight smile and he nods. He’s a very handsome man in Luci’s eyes. Another one of those he’d sort into ‘the beautiful people’. Tall, broad shoulders, dark hair and soulful blue eyes. Nice jawline with five o’clock shadow. Good looks are something that usually puts Luci a bit on edge, since he, well he’s not. But this guy’s aura is way too sympathetic.
“Okay. I’m going to examine Mikey now and I want you to hold his head to soothe him because it will hurt a bit. I’ll be as careful as I can.”

“Okay,” Luci nods his agreement and crouches down so he’s face to face with the dog while he keeps it’s head down by petting him. The medic puts gloves on and starts his examination.

“This doesn’t look good at all. His leg has been thoroughly crushed, seemingly grinded to pieces. There are fragment of bone missing. Good news is that he isn’t bleeding anymore. But I can’t see any other option than to amputate the leg. It would be the most painless solution in the long run.”

“Okay,” Luci says again. It comes out weaker than he’d liked it to. That lump in his throat returning.

“It shouldn’t be a big problem. Dogs can function very well with only three legs,” the medic soothes him. “Now. I could do it here, but the risk of infection is greater than it’s worth. There’s a vet station about two miles from here. If you can take him there they’ll have better equipment to work with. It’s up to you. I’ll give him something for the pain and secure his leg so it doesn’t move around if you choose the latter.”

“That’s what you recommend?”

“Yes. Don’t get me wrong. I’ll do anything in my power to give him the best treatment I can. Visiting the vet will most likely be costly…”

“Money’s no object. I’ll buy a goddam animal hospital if that’s what it takes. As long as Mikey comes out on top of it.”

The medic’s lips quirk in a small but warm smile. “I don’t it will be quite as expensive as that. Let me get my equipment and I’ll patch this little bee up.”

“Thank you, doc.”

“It’s my pleasure.”

A while later he’s driving down the road down to the vet. Mikey is bundled into a blanket in the passenger seat, drowsy from the painkillers. Lucifer keeps stroking his head, mumbling soothing nonsense, trying hard not to think of Sam and the vile encounter. When he fails that stupid fucking
lump in his throat comes back, making it hard to swallow and choking his voice. Every time it
does Mikey licks his hand.

Sam has lost track of Dean and the others. He ran into some people he knew from law school and
their friends taking a break and stopped for a chat. Suddenly someone behind him calls out “Hey,
I know that asshole. What didja do, Alighieri? Out for a round of golf when the flood hit ya?” A
couple of guys in the company laughs. “Serves you right, you fucking scum of the earth.”

Sam turns around as someone else adds “People like you deserve it!”

Lucifer is walking straight towards them, clutching his stomach like he’s wounded or carrying
something precious inside his jacket. He’s soaked from head to toe with mud and reddish water.
Sam is stricken. What’s he doing here? Lucifer looks at their group with acute hatred until his eyes
fall upon Sam. His eyes widens and for a beat he looks as dumbstruck as Sam. Then his
expression flickers into hurt and he turns on his heel and walks away, elongating his step.

“Lucifer!” Sam calls out after him but he doesn’t stop so Sam swirls towards the group, full of
righteous anger. “Jesus, what’s wrong with you?! You don’t just say things like that to people!
What manner of monsters are you?!”

“Calm down. The guy’s an asshole. The creeps he defen—”

“No, he’s not. He’s a good guy just doing his job, just as we are. Only thing is he’s doing it way,
way better than any of us. Christ! You know what? I don’t want anything to do with you.” Sam
stalks away, ignoring any calls from the group. He hurries in the direction Lucifer disappeared but
however he looks he can’t find him. After a frustrating search he meets Cas, toting his bag of
medical equipment and decides to call the search off. “Hey, Cas. Glad you could make it. I
thought you’d be here sooner.”

Cas smiles. “Sorry. I got held up by a man with a wounded dog by the parking lot. Can you direct
me to where I’m needed the most?”

“Of course. Follow me.” Sam tries to put the incident out of his mind, but anger and guilt gnaws at
him. And what was Lucifer doing here? Was it this that call had been about? Either way, this was
another stone to his burden of things he needed to apologise for.
Chapter Summary

Mystery Man takes their "relationship" to another level and Dean just can't keep himself from meddling. Sam thinks sometimes it's a good thing. At least there's something to take his mind off Lucifer.

Chapter Notes

A huge thanks to Mizz_Kitty21 for helping me Beta read this! Your help means a lot! No mistakes that are left should be put on her shoulders though, I wrote it, if it's messed up somewhere, it's all on me. ^^'

Communication is Key

Third party engagement

As the day nears it's end Sam makes his way to Dean’s car. Dean and Cas are already there, standing close with their heads together. Sam can hear Dean talking quietly and earnestly. It sounds like it's a private conversation so even if he can hear every word he doesn’t try to make any sense of it. It probably doesn't concern him anyway. He opens the trunk of the Impala and takes out his duffel with his change of clothes and dry towel. He shimmies out of his wet clothes and sets out to dry off, unmindful of possible watchers. He’s too tired and sore.

"I'm telling you Cas, it's the same guy. What with the description an' all. It just fits. And I've got a strong suspicion that it's him behind the video too."

"Are you sure? It could just be coincidences."

"Not yet. But there are too many coincidences for me to believe that. I'm willing to bet a grand that I'm right."

"Are you going to tell him?"

"And ruin all the fun? Fuck no!"

Cas chuckles. "Very well. So what are you going to do about it?"

"I dunno yet. But I'll think of something. They’d be great together and I like this guy. I think he'll slot right into the family."

Sam is finally somewhat dry and in fresh clothes. He slams the trunk shut and turns to Cas and Dean. "You guys ready to go home?"
"Hell yeah. We're just waiting for your sluggish ass to get ready, Samantha."

Sam raises his eyebrows when Cas gets into the passenger's seat. He climbs into the back. "Are you riding with us? I thought you came in your own car."

"I did. But I met a colleague who carpooled here. His wife went into labour so I lent him my car so he could get back," Cas says with a little smile.

"That's nice. I like that so many we know volunteered. A crisis really brings out the best of people."

Dean snorts and puts the car in drive. "Yeah. Or the worst," he scoffs. He pulls out of the parking lot and onto the highway. "There was this one guy who made me want to just pack up and go home. Let all these poor fuckers just drown. And beat the guy to a pulp first for good measure."

"What happened?"

"We were struggling to get this married couple out of the water. Back where the current was the strongest, right? Me and the guys had a fucking hell of it. So we get the husband out first, still struggling to get the wife out safely. She's screaming for her daughter all the time, right?" He throws a look at Sam through the rearview mirror. "You know what the asshole starts yelling about when he’s on dry land? His wife still out in the rapids and his daughter who knows where? Fuck no. He goes 'My house! All my belongings!'"

"No way! That’s horrible!"

"It's fucking disgusting, that's what it is. Turns out there is a God though. Some guy pulled the daughter out of the water further downstream. Alive. We met the wife and little girl by the paramedics. The man was gone, not with his family as you'd be if you gave a shit. We found him later, dead as a doornail. Still clutching a fucking jewellery box. That’s what I call just desserts."

"Oh my god. But it's still a tragedy, Dean. A little girl lost her father."

"Fuck that, Sammy. You and I know better than anyone what damage poisonous parents can do. That girl stands a better chance of growing up with a healthy self-image without him."

"Dad wouldn’t have acted like that," Sam protests.

"No he wouldn’t. He’d both sacrificed himself or killed for us in a crisis. I'm not denying that. But the shit he did to us on a daily basis? Fucked me up fucking bad, Sam. Even you don’t know how bad. It’s a fucking miracle I've started getting my shit together."

"It's called PTSD, Dean. He loved us. He couldn’t help—"

"I know what the fuck it's called, Sam! It doesn’t change a fucking thing and I don't want to talk about it right now, okay?" Dean clenches his jaws and stares angrily at the road.

Honestly, Sam doesn’t want to talk about it either. The both of them have very complicated feelings about their father. Fifteen, ten years ago Dean had been the one defending their father and Sam had been the angry one. But that had changed recent years. None of them had visited their dad in prison.

"While you had a demoralising experience my arrival gave me quite the opposite," Cas says, breaking the sullen silence that had dropped over the car. Both Sam and Dean perk up at the prospect of a mood break.
"Oh yeah?"

"Yes. I was barely out of the car before a man approached me with a wounded dog. Poor little bee had his leg grinded to a... well it wasn't pretty. He'll end up three-legged but the amount of compassion and care the owner showed for the dog is what makes me do what I do. And all that compassion for animals and people kept barraging me once I made it to the red zone."

"What? Somebody wailing over their dog is all it takes for you to get all mushy?" Dean says gruffly but with a fond smile.

Cas chuckles. "He wasn't wailing, Dean. In fact, he reminded me of you when we first met. A stoic pillar of strength outwardly but with a riptide of emotions behind the mask."

"Was he hot?"

"Dean!" Sam chides, but Cas just chuckles again.

"Hard to tell. He was covered in mud."

"Shame," Dean says and winks at Cas, the two of them share a private smile. Sam thinks the dynamics between the two is a fuckton more complicated than it appears at first glance and that he really doesn't want to know what goes on under the surface. Dean throws a look at Sam in the rearview mirror. "How bout you, Sammy? Where did you run off to?"

"I helped build barricades at first, then I helped people who'd lost their homes to get settled in a school."

"Must have been quite a lot of stressed out peeps, huh?"

"Yeah. People fretting about their friends and family. But, as more people kept coming there were some truly heartwarming reunions."

"I bet. If I wasn't such a macho man, I would have confessed to crying when we saved and reunited two siblings that were really fucking emotional about it. But I'm no sap so I'm not gonna," Dean says and winks.

Sam and Cas chuckles. "Yeah. I cried too a couple of times," Sam confesses. It was hard not to. Happy tears shared with people being reunited with loved ones. It’s harder to stave those off than those borne out of mourning. After a moment of shared silence Sam says "I saw him there."

"Who?"

"Lucifer. I wonder what he was doing there."

Dean and Cas share a look Sam can’t interpret. "Probably same as us."

"You think so?"

"Yeah. I think so."

Somebody shakes Luci’s shoulder and he comes awake with a jerk. He blinks, trying to get the fog out of his brain and figure out where the hell he is, why he is wet and his whole body is screaming with aches and pains. A nurse is standing over him with a kind but worried smile. "Sir? Sir, are you awake?"

Her smile grows wider. "He is fine, Sir. The surgery went well. We've put a drip on him. He was very dehydrated. But he's a fighter. We'll keep him here for a couple of days to watch him for infections or other complications. It looks good though. Right now I'm more worried about you to be honest. I just noticed that you are bleeding."

"I'm fine," he replies automatically. He might not be fine his head supplies. His hip is throbbing like fire and it's not his only point of pain.

The nurse isn't buying it. "No you're not. And if you die out of infection it won't do Mikey any good. Come on. Let's get you patched up and into clean clothes. You can borrow our showers too."

"This is an animal clinic?" His exhausted brain is still trying to get the details to fall in place. He's sitting on a bench in the waiting room and it's dark outside the window.

"Yes, Sir. But the closest hospital is miles away and you're in no condition to drive. Don't worry. We know how to take care of humans too. As long as you don't require major surgery you'll be alright."

Two hours later he's warm and dry, shot full of antibiotics and painkillers. He feels warm and fuzzy. The gash on his hip he'd acquired when he rescued Mikey and the girl had required twelve stitches, some other wounds had gotten a stitch or two. He'd been thoroughly scolded by the vet for ignoring his own injuries. A well deserved scolding, he could admit. But worry about Mikey had taken precedence. He's wearing a borrowed shirt that strains over the shoulders and borrowed sweatpants that are a bit too short. He sits in the staff break room with the vet—a grumpy man named Bobby Singer who, despite his gruff demeanor, had gentle and caring hands—and the nurse, Hannah, sipping a cup of coffee.

Somehow the story of how he got Mikey slipped out of him (even if he left out the part of him committing the crime 'attempted murder' by dislodging the rope ladder). Bobby then suggested they'd put a chip on Mikey and register Luci as the owner since the dog had neither chip nor tattoo in his ear. It would make Lucifer’s claim on the dog much harder to refute. Said and done. Within minutes Luci was the official owner and Mikey was registered, chip and all.

"What I'd like to know, son, is how you ended up here when there's a huge animal hospital much closer. We ain't exactly the first place in mind for pet owners," Bobby says.

"Why not?" Lucifer asks, intrigued. The facility is not exactly small and they're very well equipped.

"We take care of wildlife mostly. And when we take in pets we're not cheap as it's expensive to run the place," Hannah answers with a smile.

"Money's no object," Lucifer says, probably for the millionth time. He'd repeated that over and over when he brought Mikey in, wanting the best care he could get. "As for how, I told you I met a medic that patched Mikey up and gave him something for the pain. He gave me directions for this place."

"S a good thing that he did, son. They're probably swarmed over there by now."

"What was his name?" Hannah asks.

"I forgot to ask," Luci admits.
"Then what did he look like?" she probes. Lucifer gives her a description and is rewarded with a smile. "That sounds like the chief surgeon of the hospital I used to work at before I decided I wanted to work with animals instead. Or what do you think, Bobby?"

"Yup. Sounds like Cas, alright," Bobby confirms and sips his coffee.

"Wait. As in Dean’s Cas?" The question slips out of him before he can think, a true testament to how exhausted he really is.

"That’s him. You know Dean Winchester?"

"Yes. We’re... friends I suppose," Lucifer concedes. For how long they will remain that way is another matter. Especially since Dean only knows him as Nick and probably would deny having a friend named Lucifer. But that’s a problem for another day.

"Good boys, the two of them," Bobby says fondly. From what Lucifer has seen he can only agree.

He gets to spend the night sleeping in a bed they’ve got in the back for staff. The day has been taxing both physically and emotionally and he falls asleep almost as soon as his head hits the pillow.

As much as he hates leaving Mikey duty calls on Monday. He gets home in time to change clothes, pour fresh water in the cat’s bowl and put food in the other bowl. Lucy isn’t there but that’s a worry for later. The day goes on autopilot. A court case in the morning, followed by tedious negotiations back at his office. Mid negotiation his phone rings. Dean’s number flashes on the display and Luci’s gut twists anxiously, expecting the worst. He steps out to accept the call. Turns out Dean just wondered if he was free for lunch. So when lunch rolls around he meets Dean in the park and they go to a nearby steakhouse. They order the same thing and chat about everything and nothing. Dean is just as easygoing as he’d been both times they’d met before and Lucifer relaxes. There’s no mention of the dog or anything else that would indicate that Dean know who he is. He finds himself laughing a lot and wishing this friendship didn’t have to end. They part with Dean telling him not to be a stranger. Lucifer thinks that apart from the name Dean is one of few who actually sees him for who he is.

The rest of the day goes without incident. He stops by the petstore on his way home to pick up a couple of books about dogs, intending to go straight to the vet station once he has changed clothes. Those plans are scrapped as soon as Lucy greets him at the door without her name tag but with the USB drive still on her collar.

It’s with a pounding heart he puts the drive in his computer, Lucy purring on his lap. After all, Sam might not have replied. Or figured out there was a message on the USB device. He might have thought it was just some fancy decoration or something.

Oh shut up. He’s not stupid. He’ll have figured it out.

Still. With how he ended his video there might just be a text file telling him to fuck off or police would be called upon to interfere.

His own file is still on the drive but now there’s one more video file named "Dear L" and and his stomach flutters in elation. He presses play.

It begins with the text "You’re wrong" that fades to pictures of Lucy as a kitten, one after another showing her growing. Lucifer finds himself smiling. He’s touched. Sam is showing him what he
has missed. Then the screen goes black and Sam's voice rolls out of his speakers. "You’re wrong, L. Mimi isn’t evil. You’re just a bad problem solver." His voice is warm and amused and it makes Luci laugh. Then there's video footage of a glass on a table. Lucy comes wandering into the shot and sits down regarding the glass. She looks at the camera, then the glass, then the camera again and monumentally slowly moves her paw to the glass. Someone sniggers in the background (Luci thinks it's Dean) and Sam whispers "Shut up." Luci shoves the glass off the table, the camera follows it.

It bounces with the distinctive sound of plastic.

Luci laughs again. Problem solving indeed. The next shot is of Lucy bumping an unopened beer bottle of a living room table using her butt. The bottle is plastic too.

Next shot is of Sam’s long fingers on the keyboard of a laptop. Lucy saunters into view and promptly lies down on top of Sam’s hands, no news there. Another hand comes into view and puts down a shoe box next to the laptop. Lucy gets up and goes to climb into the shoebox instead. "See? That wasn’t so hard was it?" Sam says. "Sometimes you just have to think inside the box." Someone chuckles in the background at the same time as Dean groans. "Dude! That's so lame. We can’t use this shot!"

Lucifer sniggers as the video cuts to another shot of Lucy following the camera from the living room to the hallway and to the bedroom. Both camera and Lucy comes to a stop outside of the bedroom. "Now look closely at this, L. If you don’t want to be smothered in your sleep, this is what you do." The cameraman (Sam) backs into the bedroom and closes the door, Lucy still sitting outside. The camera pans over the bedroom. "Do you see this, L? No murder plotting cat anywhere. No disturbances. There’s no one here in the bedroom except you and me..." There’s silence for a beat, the camera trained on the bed, then Sam says "Wow. This just got awkward. Um. That's about it. Right."

The video cuts off after Sam’s last flustered sentences and Lucifer is left grinning. He wonders if Sam had meant for the last shot to be so heavy with innuendo or if it was a mistake. But if it was he could have just reshot the scene. It was still a fair deal more innocent than Lucifer's video. It wasn't, however you looked at it, rejection.

Nowhere in the video could you see Sam, but he didn't hide his voice like Luci did. Luci rewatches the video ten times and copies it to Dropbox so he can watch it anywhere. He gets up, feeds Lucy and takes a shower. He jerks off in the shower thinking about kissing Sam. Nothing else, just kissing him. It’s all it takes for him to come. He thinks it's a pretty lame fantasy and that he should be thinking about fucking him stupid but it doesn't sit well with him to have elaborate sexual fantasies about someone who’d be opposed to the idea. Of course he fantasizes anyway sometimes. It's inevitable. Especially when he's in their presence and gets barraged with impressions like sight, touch, and scent. The thoughts he'd had lying half atop of Sam at Sunshine Hill, with his finger pressed against those sweet lips had been anything but innocent. He had to roll off him and pull up his leg to hide the resulting erection. It was embarrassing.

Luci gets dressed in a tee and jeans, grabs the books he’s bought and heads to his car. On his way to the vet he stops by at an electronics shop and buys a prepaid phone for the sake of getting an unlisted number.

Mikey is in a kennel with a cone on his head and wags his tail happily at the sight of Luci. The dog is looking much better today and had had a bath, revealing he is mostly white with a few tan spots. He’s still drowsy from the painkillers they’re supplying him with. He gets to come out of the kennel to lie in Luci’s lap while he sits on the floor and reads, stroking Mikey absently and asking Bobby questions based on what he reads. Mikey falls asleep, twitching from time to time and snoring softly.
"It says here you have to brush the dog's teeth. Can't you just give them what's-it-called, that stuff on TV? A dentastix?"

"Boy, that ain't enough for most dogs. Teeth are just as important to them as they are to us. And with all the crap we're feedin' our pets these days..."

"Do you need to brush your cat's teeth to?"

Bobby snorts in amusement. "If you do, well good luck to you, son."

Lucifer thinks about trying to brush Lucy's teeth and how she would react. He makes a face. "Point taken." He keeps reading while Bobby tends to menial tasks in the vicinity. Most of the animals here will be reintroduced to the wild once they have healed up and thus require minimal human interaction as it would be bad for them to become tame. "It says here raisins, grapes, and chocolate is poisonous to dogs," Lucifer states.

"Very."

"But you can buy dog chocolate in the pet store?"

"There's almost no cacao in it. The darker the chocolate, the worse it is."

"Mh. Will Mikey be able to walk again?"

Bobby is very patient with all his questions, answering each and every one in his gruff way. This time though he smiles. "Son, I'm surprised he ain't up and runnin' yet. My guess it's cause of the additional trauma from yesterday. He was dehydrated and exhausted. Lad just needs to rest and then he'll be back raisin' hell in no time."

"That's good. You think he'll be able to go with me on my runs?"

"That shouldn't be a problem. Be careful not to let him over do it. While having three legs won't make much difference to his mobility it does put a lot of stress on his remaining joints and if he gets a sprain or something he'll have nothing to fall back on."

"Okay. Anything else?"

"Yeah. Try keepin' him lean an' fit. Obesity is a common problem amongst pets these days an' it'll affected him worse than others. Mikey is on the verge of being emaciated so he'll need to put some weight on first. Also, whatever people tell ya, it ain't enough to just let a dog run around in the yard. They need daily walks."

Lucifer snorts. "I could figure that out with my ass. If I'm bored senseless by being cooped up day in and day out in my house it's natural to assume he is too."

Bobby gives him one of his closelipped smiles. "indeed. An' I gotta tell ya, jack russells ain't the easiest of breeds. They're high energy dogs and smart as hell. You wanna keep his mind stimulated too or he might be trouble for ya."

"Got it. And how do I do that?"

"Teach him tricks, make him perform tasks, play with him."

Animals take to Luci but he's never paid much attention to reading up on them unless he needs the knowledge. Like bees. He knows a shit ton about bees. He knows a lot about what local birds eat
so he can properly feed them in his garden. He doesn’t know the name of most species he attracts though. It’s not important. He hasn’t done a lot of research on cats. Lucy strolled into his life like she belonged there and can just as easily stroll out and never come back (It’d break his heart even if he won’t admit it). Mikey though, he has no choice. He’s been thrust upon Luci whether he wants it or not and Luci is determined to give Mikey a good life. It's a bit daunting to be honest so he'll do all the research he can.

Later in the evening Mikey proves that he can, indeed, walk. Luci helps cleaning pens and cages and Mikey follows him around like a tail while Luci talks to him like he does with all animals, uncaring of what Hannah and Bobby will think. Honestly, if anything they seem to warm up to him even more because of it.

They invite Luci to stay for dinner. Homemade stew. It’s simple and tastes great. Mikey does a fabulous job of entertaining himself with a rag by their feet for a while until he grows weary and falls asleep. Hannah goes to feed some fox kits and Luci is left alone with Bobby. "Do you know Dean well?" Luci asks.

Bobby scrutinises him over the rim of his cup for a while before he answers. "Not as well as I'd like to, but we're getting there. I was friends with his old man for a while. We served together in the marines. He was a good man back then." He stops, seeming to deliberate how much to tell. "A lot must have changed then. Dean told me he kicked Sam out of the house at what? Thirteen? Fourteen? And with him on death row now..."

Bobby reacts as he hoped when he hears that Lucifer knows these things already. He sighs. "Yeah. Both John an’ me got wounded in the war. We did an’ saw things over there an’ it messes with your head. Pride was John’s undoing. He had terrible nightmares, insomnia, the works. But he wouldn’t take help from anyone, insisting he was fine. Then his wife up an’ died an’ somethin’ in ’im just broke. He turned to the bottle. I tried to help, offered to take care of the boys till he was back on his feet. He refused to admit he had a problem. Instead he took the boys and went awol. Didn’t see the boys again til last year when Cas came to visit Hannah, boyfriend in tow."

"Dean," Lucifer surmises needlessly.

"That's right. Broke my heart to hear what happened to 'em but they done good with what life gave 'em. Good boys, the two of 'em." Bobby concedes, not for the first time.

Lucifer can only agree.

Back in his bed at home sleep eludes Luci for a long time. His body is still full of aches and pains but it's his mind that won't shut down. He has always been good at focusing on one thing with single minded determination. It's like shoving a snowball down a hill and watch it grow and pick up speed as it gets bigger. Sam is that snowball right now. Luci keeps thinking about the gym, the video, and the run in with Sam when he was heading to the car with Mikey. The thoughts cause extreme emotions—elation and excitement, hurt and anger.

When sleep finally claims him the dreams are a terrible mix of warped memories of his life. Except Sam is there, scorn in his face. He’s among the kids tripping him in school, laughing at him when he falls into a mud puddle. He’s there when parents yanks their children away from him in kindergarten. He’s there when he gets top score on every test in high school, Sam standing amongst the people accusing him of cheating. He's there when Luci refuse to swear fealty to to the flag every morning in school unless the teacher explains the terms and conditions of such pledge and as a consequence get sent to the headmaster, earning him his father's ire and daily detention for every day he refused. He is there when Luci gets accepted into Yale on a full ride at the age of
sixteen, and his father tells him that if he persists on going down that road he’s no longer part of the family. He’s there when Luci gets beat up in an alley by three strangers after winning his first big case. The night is just an endless parade of bad memories, all twisted to fit Sam in.

When he wakes his cheeks are wet and he is angry. He clings to that anger like he’s done so many times before, makes it his armour and uses it to distance himself from the world, to fuel the fire that makes him so brilliant at what he does.

"You heard from Lucy’s other dad yet?" Dean asks from where he’s leaning over the stove, stirring something in a pot. Sam suspects that he’d skip dinner more often than not if Dean didn’t stop by and cooked or brought take out. He’s also fairly sure Dean knows this and that’s why he comes over as often as he does. He doesn’t always stay very long, just until Cas’ shift ends.

"No. She came back with a new name tag but no message. You think I put him off by doing that thing with the bed?" He doesn’t want that. Whatever annoyance he’d felt initially at the man had dissipated with the video. Now he considered the mystery man as something good. One of the few things that could distract him from the disaster that was his crush on Lucifer.

Dean chuckles. "Nah. It was perfect. Shows what a fucking moron you are when it comes to flirting."

"Hey! I can flirt!"

"No, Sammy. You really can’t," Dean says with a grin and turns his head long enough to give Sam a cheeky wink. "Don’t worry. You just need to give him time. Sides, the guy’s as crappy at it as you are."

Sam snorts. "You make it sound as if you know him." Sam taps his pen repeatedly against the document he’d been studying at the kitchen table until he got distracted by the tantalizing smell of Dean’s cooking. His pen stills suddenly and he looks sharply at his big brother’s back. "Dean. Do you know him?" he asks suspiciously.

"Don’t you think I would have told you if I did?" Dean says with a grin but without turning to look at him.

"No. I think you’d watch us make fool of ourselves while you lean back with a bucket of popcorn and enjoy the show," Sam grumbles.

"How could you even think that about me?" Dean spins around clutching his chest in mock horror. "I’m wounded, Sam. Deeply wounded." He brandishes the spatula accusingly in Sam’s direction. "Those are some serious allegations."

"So it's true then? You do know who he is?" Sam says dryly. Dean sniggers and turns back to his cooking. Sam doesn’t actually believe that though. Dean would get a kick out of it if he managed to get Sam to believe it however so he doesn't push the issue. His phone chirps with a text message notification. It's from a number he doesn’t recognise.

"Hey Sammy. I'm off to the vet in an hour. Has Lucy had all her shots or should I bring her?"

Sam’s heart leaps to his throat. "Dean! He just texted me!"

"Who did?" Dean turns around with rapt curiosity at the agitated tone of Sam’s voice.

"He did! Lucy’s oth—" Sam bites his tongue at the slip of Mimi’s name.
"Aha! She's officially renamed now," Dean says triumphantly then strides to straddle the chair opposite Sam, ignoring the bitchface he gets. "So? What does he say?" he urges.

Sam reads the text back to him.

"So what are you waiting for? Answer him!"

Sam texts:

"Is she alright? Did something happen to her?"

The reply comes instantly.

"No, jackass. If it did I would have said so. Just answer the damned question."

Sam scoffs at the phone and Dean thinks it's hilarious.

"No. She should have gotten her shots last month but time has been scarce. Why are you going to the vet?"

"I'll take her then. Don't worry about it."

Sam frowns at his phone, annoyed at not getting an answer to his own question when another text comes.

"I suddenly became a dog owner this weekend. It was unplanned for. But then again, so was Lucy's and consequently your appearance in my life. Somewhat inconvenient but far from unwelcome. I'm happy to adapt to positive changes even when they come with some hassle."

Dean sees Sam's bemused smile and scrambles over since Sam didn’t read this one aloud. "Dude, let me see," he demands and snatches the phone out of Sam’s hands. He grins as he reads. "This is great. He's taking your relationship to the next level. Now you can talk directly to him whenever you want."

Sam rolls his eyes. "We don’t have a 'relationship'." Sam does air quotes around the last word. Dean isn’t listening. He’s backing out of Sam's reach and tapping away on the phone with alarming speed. Sam’s stomach twists nervously. "Dean. What are you doing? You’re not... are you answering him?" Dean's mischievous grin and focus on the phone is answer enough. "Oh my god, you are! Gimme my phone back!" Sam launches himself at Dean and they grapple for the phone, Dean cackling all the way through. Once he finally gets the phone back it turns out it's too late. His phone chirps before he can check if Dean sent anything. It's with trepidation he opens the conversation.

"Inconvenience, huh? Hey at least the cat comes with benefits. See as she’s taking care of your little bird problem outside of your kitchen window. ;) How did she react to finding a dog in your home anyway? Oh and how did she end up at your place to begin with?"

(Apart from the very distasteful joke about the birds Dean’s message wasn’t as bad as Sam had feared.)

"You've got a point. I'd rather it was you who came with benefits though..."
"I don't know yet. The dog required some major surgery and will stay at the vet until tomorrow night. So they'll meet today for the first time."

"I had my door open and she just strolled right in proclaiming the house was hers now, demanding rent and complaining about the food. I keep telling her I hate cats but either she doesn't give a shit or she calls my bluff."

Sam laughs and reads the reply aloud. "I thought you were going to write something much worse," Sam tells Dean.

"Nah. Just wanted to get a conversation going. You're kinda crappy at that when you're not working."

It's truer than Sam likes to admit. When he has a task or a purpose he can talk to anyone. He's been hiding behind causes all his life, using them as armour of false confidence. Beyond digging for facts or aiming for a goal he's hopeless at icebreakers. Sam considers for a while and Dean takes the potatoes of the stove and continues stirring whatever it is he's cooking. "He's kind of a jerk," Sam states.

"Nah. A bit rough around the edges perhaps."

"He called me a jackass."

"Yeah, and you made fun of his birds getting killed, so you're even."

"Technically that was you, but fair enough. He writes texts like I imagine Cas does." (Cas only calls him.)

"Pffhah! Dude, not even close! Cas is all about smileys and emoticons. Believe me, if Cas sent me a long, proper text like that I wouldn't believe it was from him," Dean says and sets the table.

"Huh."

"Yeah. I'm as surprised as you. And he has the annoying habit of answering with just 'k'. Not even writing the whole word out." Dean makes a face and Sam chuckles.

Sam starts writing an answer to the text.

"Will the dog be alright? I can pay for Mimi's shots."

He pauses and thinks for a beat, then he grins and writes:

"And if you want me to come with benefits you'll have to work for it. ;)

"The dog will be fine. Keep your money. I need to spend mine on something and some lawfully sanctioned animal abuse of the syringe persuasion seems as good way as any. Plus, with no intention to offend, I can 100% guarantee that I'm a couple of income brackets above you. This will not dent my wallet."

Sam chuckles. He doesn't know if he should feel amused, offended, or grateful. He thinks the guy is funny. At the same time pride makes the statement sting. It would however put a dent in his wallet, whether he likes it or not. Vet visits are never cheap even for mundane things like getting a pet's vaccinations up to date. Another 30 seconds pass before a second text comes.
"Be warned, Sam. I'm a very goal oriented hard worker. You've officially poked the bear."

Sam laughs out loud this time. "Dude. I can’t decide if the guy is cute and funny or a conceited dick. I mean, look at this."

"Those are not mutually exclusive, you know?" Dean says and reaches for the phone. He reads and sniggers. "He just keeps brushing your triggers, doesn’t he? And then smooths your ruffled hairs back down again. I like him. He’s a keeper." He hands the phone back, thankfully not writing anything this time.

"You keep saying that. I dunno. I guess one good thing about him though, is that when I think of him I forget about Lucifer for a while at least."

Dean chokes on spittle and excuse himself to go to the bathroom. Sam can hear him laugh in there. It's disconcerting to say the least. Sam wonders what set him off.
Wearing the Uniform

Chapter Summary

Lucifer makes Sam an offer that, apparently, he can refuse.... Things start heating up, feathers are ruffled and emotions run high.

Chapter Notes

Yet again, thanks Mizz_Kitty21 for helping me Beta read this! It goes a long way to get a second pair of eyes helping out.

Wearing the Uniform

Fire in the hole!

Sam is a bundle of nerves when he steps out of the elevator and makes his way to Lucifer's secretary. It's not the same woman as last time. This new woman is stunning. She looks up and begins speaking before he can get a word out. "Ah. Mr. Winchester. You’re ten minutes early. Mr. Alighieri is still on his break. You can go in if you'd like, but I warn you, if you wish to have an adult conversation with him you're better off waiting out here." She points at an open door and looks down on her computer again, rudely losing interest in him as soon as she's said her piece.

"Oh. Okay. Thanks..." Sam answers, bemused and slightly put upon. He wondered if 'non-service mindedness' is part of the requirements for working for Lucifer. He goes to the office door and peeks inside.

Lucifer’s office is big. One wall is nothing but a window, with a stunning view of the city. there's a heavy curtain mounted on a rail in a corner. The kind that will cover the window/wall with a push of a button. There are four comfy looking armchairs around a low glass table with a foot in the form of a large bronze octopus in a corner of the office. A mahogany bookcase rings the three solid walls, ending at hip height and on top of it there’s several sculptures and glass ornaments of different things. A single look tells Sam they are all originals or very limited editions but none recognisable as any famous artists. Same goes for the three large paintings on the walls. They’re unknown artists as far as Sam can tell. He'd really like to look closer at them. All have some steampunk/fantasy motives—not something you usually find in a lawyer’s office. One of them in particular catches his interest. In brilliant colours clockwork bees and hummingbirds forage bright yellow flowers. Sam thinks Cas would love that one. He’s very into bees.

Behind Lucifer’s desks he's got a couple of diplomas mounted, the one from Yale being centre stage. There's also clocks mounted displaying the time in multiple cities and countries. The desk is the most 'no-fucks-given' piece of furniture in the room. It's huge, solid, and made of wood, with a board that hides his legs and feet, but very simplistic compared to everything else. This is not at all what Sam expected.
He must have been staring at the desk too long because the man behind it who’s been eating a salad lowers the fork he was about to put in his mouth and pins him with a cold glare. "Got something to say about my desk, Winchester?"

Sam startles. "No. It just wasn’t what I was expecting."

"It’s custom made. What were you expecting?"

"Something in line with the rest of the firm’s interior. A glass desk perhaps?"

Lucifer snorts and leans back in his chair. "Don’t be ridiculous. You’d be able to see my secretary then."

Sam is shocked at the sexist joke. But the secretary answers before he can.

"Oh, harr harr. Not enough diamonds in the world, Luci," she says dryly.

Lucifer grins and looks beyond Sam where the secretary is sitting at her desk. "I may have to test that theory out, Bela."

"Don’t mind if you do," she answers. "I’m off to lunch now. Don’t call if you need anything."

Then she turns to Sam "It's called banter, not harassment, so don't get worked up about it," she says to him like she'd read his mind and gives him a (condescending) pat on the shoulder when she passes him on her way out. He follows her with his eyes as she leaves. She's really, really hot.

When he turns back to Lucifer he’s disposed of the salad and come around the desk. He’s leaning against the desk with his legs crossed by the ankles, one arm across his chest and the other hand pulling on his lip thoughtfully while watching Sam. Sam can’t read his expression, despite that he feels hostility coming off Lucifer in waves which instantly brings to mind the last time they saw each other when Sam had been in the middle of the group antagonising Lucifer. It twists his stomach with guilt. Initially, Sam had not planned to apologise today, reasoning that he had too much to apologise for and it would put him too far below in power. But right now he changes his mind. He’s an idiot and clearly he can’t put two and two together when in this man's vicinity. But the least he can do is stop being an asshole.

"You just going to lurk by the door or are you going to come inside?" Lucifer prompts with a note of impatience.

"Lurk?" Sam says with a small lopsided smile and an eyebrow raised in question. Lucifer’s lips twitch in amusement and he looks away. Sam counts that both as a win and as his cue to enter. He strides up to Lucifer draped in all fake confidence he can muster and tries to ignore how his heart speeds up. "Look. Due to a series of unfortunate events we got off on the wrong foot," he says, drawing Lucifer’s attention back to him. "I'd like to start anew, properly this time." He holds out his hand towards Lucifer. "Hi. I'm Sam Winchester. A pleasure to meet you."

Lucifer looks between his eyes and outstretched hand, a calculating expression in his ice blue eyes. It’s just a beat too long before he takes the offered hand and shakes it. "Hello, Sam. Nice to meet you. I'm Lucifer Alighieri," he answers with a curt smile that doesn’t match the suspicious hostility in his eyes. Okay. So I've earned that. Lucifer doesn’t say anything else, just waits for Sam's next move.

"I owe you an apology," Sam rushes on before he loses his nerve. Their hands are still locked in a handshake and it makes Sam's skin tingle. He should let go, so should Lucifer, but Sam doesn’t want to so he pretends he isn't aware of the prolonged contact.
"You do," Lucifer says. It’s not a question neither a statement. In fact, there's no emotional inflection whatsoever.

"Yes. At the coffee shop Balt and Meg pranked me. I had no idea what was written on the cup. I was wrong and unfair to make the assumption that you defended the Sunshine assholes. I do not agree with the opinions thrown at you by the group I stood with the other day. I told them to go fuck themselves and went to find you, but you were gone by then."

Lucifer scrutinises him like he could drill a hole into Sam's head and read his mind. "And my car?" he asks at last and lets go of Sam’s hand.

"Oh." Sam rubs his neck self consciously and looks away, feeling traitorous heat rush to his cheeks. "I would never admit to vandalising a car... but if I had done so it would have been a spur of the moment release of months of frustration. The car would just be whichever was the closest and I wouldn't know who owned it. Of course I would offer to pay for any damages..."

Lucifer snorts and Sam chances a peek at the man. He has the faintest of smirks playing on his lips and doesn’t seem quite as hostile anymore. Sam straightens up and gives him a sheepish smile.

"There were no damages to speak of. So. Can I offer you anything to drink before we get started? Coffee? Water? Bourbon?"

"Water, thanks."

Lucifer motions for Sam to sit in one of the two chairs opposite his side of the desk before he goes around to his chair. He takes forth two bottles of chilled still water from under his desk (Sam presumes he has a small fridge there) and hands one to Sam. He unscrews the top of his own and takes a sip. "Would you prefer to drink out of a glass? I prefer not to, and since you've seen me as I am in private there's no use pretending I'm more fancy than I am. But I have glasses if you wish," he offers with an eyebrow raised in question.

Sam shakes his head. "No thanks. This is fine. I actually prefer it this way too." He does. He blames Dean's influence for that. He unscrews his own bottle cap and takes a couple of deep swallows, trying to get the dryness out of his throat. This is ridiculous, he thinks. He’s still nervous. He should be thinking about Jo but he can’t take his eyes off the man across from him. His eyes follow the motion of Lucifer’s hand as it slowly moves up and down on the bottle. Long strong looking fingers painting lines in the condense and making Sam’s mind go X-rated with wants he shouldn’t be having right now. Lucifer twists the bottle a fraction and repeats the motion. Then again—twist and stroke, all in slow motion. Sam is suddenly aware of how the silence has dragged out and stretched. He tears his eyes away from Lucifer’s hand to look at his face, only to find him studying Sam with an unreadable expression from under heavy eyelids. Blood rushes to Sam’s face at being caught staring and Lucifer’s lips curve into a slight smirk when Sam blushes. He wonders if it shows, if Lucifer knows what he’s thinking about. Dean said Lucifer is into him. It made sense when Dean said it, but now Sam's back to thinking he’s wrong. He takes another gulp of water to distract himself.

Lucifer leans forward, crossing his arms and leaning them on the desk top. "Let's cut to the chase, shall we?" he says, taking the lead. "Without bringing into question whether my client deserved what he got or not, we both know your client is guilty. It would serve her best interest if this never reaches court. Should these allegations against her be dropped, miss Harvelle will go on to have a spotless record and can continue her career within the force. Then you can, should you be so inclined," he makes a circling 'go on'-motion with his hand, "go on a crusade against the misogynistic superiors of hers who truly are the ones responsible for the situation coming to pass. By letting a rookie respond to a call alone when she shouldn't have been without a partner in the first place. Miss Harvelle was set up to fail by her superiors so that they could prove that women
are unsuited to be officers of the law. This should not be how they win."

"Uh-huh. And your client would be willing to just drop these charges out of the goodness of his heart?" Sam responds skeptically.

Lucifer snorts. "Of course he isn't. But let's face it, Winchester. My client will be sentenced to jail and fines for his other crimes that night since he didn’t hire me to defend him. All he wants out of this is money. He doesn’t care how he gets them. He is greedy, not vindictive."

Sam feels the first tendrils of anger curl in his gut. First, because of Lucifer’s blatant way of presuming his client would walk free if he defended him. Humility is clearly not one of his virtues. Confidence is one thing, but that’s just plain arrogance. Second, the implications of what Lucifer is suggesting. "So basically, you want my client to pay off your client under the table. Then he'll take back the allegations?" His voice comes out cold and clipped.

"Yes. If you take this offer I give you my word that all these problems will go away and everything will work itself out." Lucifer leans back in his chair. He has a way of slouching into it that makes it look like he’s sitting on a throne rather than looking sloppy. Lucifer’s way of owning space is just as sexy as it's infuriating.

"Yeahuh. You know your client is lying about what Harvelle did to him, right?"

"Of course." Lucifer shrugs and makes a dismissive hand gesture. "He exaggerates the damage she did. She's lying too, claiming she didn't cause as much damage as she did. This is the nature of things. Fact remains that she beat an already pacified man, which equals police brutality. Especially because your girl packs a mean punch." Lucifer leans forward again. "Let's not forget, Winchester, that there are two witnesses that can, albeit grudgingly, testify to the fact that Harvelle used excessive force. Whether they agree with her or not is a moot point. Are you really willing to chance Harvelle's career on the possibility that they'd break the law by lying under oath to her advantage? Think again. This is the best alternative."

"It's also wrong. Your client doesn't deserve to get any money out of this." Sam just can't seem to keep his temper around Lucifer and he hates that. Luckily, unlike in the elevator, this is a cold anger that keeps his voice hard and calm. Measured.

"Sam. Don’t you get it? Justitia is blind as a bat. She cares jack shit for what's wrong or right. In the eyes of the law Harvelle's crime is the same as the one committed by the cop who pulled an unarmed 14 year old girl in a bikini around by her hair. And who gets to decide who deserves a beating anyway? To suggest my client doesn't deserve to be compensated for his injuries is to support a wholly lawless society where it's up to each and every one to decide what's wrong or right. And I think we both know not everyone has the same ideas about it or what counts as just punishment for a perceived transgression."

Sam can’t decide if it irks him more that he is totally in line with what Lucifer is saying or that he’s being herded into saying yes to the offer. "And what would it cost my client to 'make this go away'?" He makes those ridiculous air quotes. Curse Cas and his influence.

Lucifer writes a sum on a writing pad and pushes the pad over. "Take the offer, Sam. I promise you, things are going to sort themselves out for your girl."

Sam looks at the sum on the pad and nearly choke. "No. Just, no. I'd rather fight you in court. That is just absurd." Sam says and taps the pad.

"Trust me, Sam. If you go to court she'll have to pay anyway. This is her best option."
"You don't think we can win?"

"Against me? No."

Lucifer says it so matter of factly Sam wants to punch the guy. It doesn't matter that he doesn’t think he can win either. He hates being told he can’t do something. He taps the pad again. "This is way too much for my client. She couldn't pay this if she wanted to. At least if we lose in court there’s the option of dividing the payment. So just, no. I'd say this is as far as this meeting is going to get. I thank you for your time. Good bye, Lucifer." Sam stands up. There’s an odd flicker of emotion Sam can’t read when he says Lucifer's name. Sam narrows his eyes. "Do you get off on people calling you Lucifer?"

Now there's a very clear flicker of anger in Lucifer’s face. "I don't know, Sam. Do you get off on people calling you Sam?" he snipes. Then his expression turns thoughtful. "It's not uncommon, now is it? People getting off on hearing their name?"

Sam staves off the impulse to do an eyeroll. "Good bye, Lucifer," he repeats and walks out of the office.

Bela is back by her desk but he pays her no heed. By the elevator Lucifer grabs a hold of his upper arm and spins him around. Sam hadn’t even heard him following. He hooks his free hand around Sam's neck and pulls him closer, earnestness in his eyes. Sam’s pulse ratchets up, the touch electric despite his anger. Sam's sure Lucifer could get him to agree to anything if he just keeps touching him. "Sam, please. Listen to reason. Present the offer to your client and advise her to take it. Just say yes and I promise you, I promise you, the money will not be a problem. Things are going to sort themselves out." There’s an edge of desperation in Lucifer's voice that Sam doesn’t understand.

"Don’t touch me," Sam snaps. To Sam's surprise Lucifer lets go as if burned. "Not everyone is a trust fund baby like you. Money doesn’t just fall from the sky for most of us." Sam's voice is hard and cold. Lucifer makes a frustrated face.

"Just think about it, okay? And call me on Monday."

The elevator dings open and Sam steps inside without another word looking into Lucifer’s eyes until the doors slide shut. They’re full of what looks like regret.

"Well that was pathetic."

Lucifer spins around and fixes Bela with a cold stare. "Aren't you supposed to be at lunch?" he snaps.

"I was. But I came back to get my coat and saw you two making doe eyes at each other and decided to enjoy the show. I thought you wanted to nail the guy for something. I was surprised to find that in reality you wanted to nail the guy," Bela smirks.

Lucifer rubs a tired hand over his face. "Is it that fucking obvious?"

Bela puts her feet on her desk, crossed by the ankles and takes up a nail file, proceeds to use it. "It is if one knows you."

"For the love of—!" Lucifer throws his hands up in vexation. "You’ve been working for me, what? A week? What am I? Cellophane? I should never have had that talk with you."

Bela's smirk gets wider. She studies her nails smugly. "Oh the talk was great. When you ordered
everyone out of the staff lounge except me and proceeded to put a diamond necklace around my neck the rumour started that we're having an affair. Even Raphael is wary around me now," she purrs.

As well as she should be satisfied. The talk they had in the wake of that is what had propelled them into the strangely intimate and honest relationship they had now. Raphael may be second in command on this ship and destined to take over should Lucifer ever choose to retire. But Bela held a lot of influence over Lucifer. The 'talk' had been more of a duel than anything. Bela may or may not be named Bela Talbot, but Lucifer had called her bluff on a number of things. She lacked the education she claimed to have, all her credentials and diplomas fake. He was 96% sure she was wanted by the law. None of that mattered to Luci. He could honestly say he has never had an employee he felt more comfortable with. Her diplomas would hold under investigation and the only way he knew they were fake was because he had guessed it and pretended he knew. Plus, she had her own kind of loyalty. As long as he kept her happy he'd have all her viles on a leash.

"So what gave me away?"

Bela laughs and looks up. "Apart from staring at him like he was the greatest wonder of the world while you jerked off that bottle in slowmo? By the way, the only reason he didn't notice was that he was busy staring at your hand trying not to pop a boner. Laughable. But apart from that it was your pathetic grovelling that gave you away."

Luci scoffs. "I didn't grovel."

Bela arches an eyebrow and gives him a dry look. "I promise I'll make all your problems go away, Sam. I promise, just say yes. Please, Sam. Call me?" she parodies him in the pitiful voice of a high school wallflower trying to get the attention of the star quarterback. "You might as well have told him what you planned to do," she says in a normal voice.

Luci hisses in frustration. "And how would that look, huh? Besides, there's a good reason it's a secret I'm behind the foundation. Unless he figures it out I don't want him to know."

"It's a mystery how the whole world hasn't figured it out already with the name you chose," Bela states.

"Everybody isn't as clever as you."

"Clearly."

"Did I really grovel?"

"You did."

"Fuck!" Lucifer turns back to his office and shuts the door on Bela's laughter. He goes around his desk and crouches down under it. Mikey is sleeping in a comfortable travel cage underneath it but stirs when he opens the cage door. "Hey, Mikey. Wanna come up?" The dog's tail thumps against the wall of the covered cage. He comes out and Luci lifts him, holds him to his chest and crawls up into his chair. He pets the dog and scratches him behind the ears. "Your new daddy doesn't know what the hell he's doing," he confesses. "If Sam doesn't say yes I can't pay off my client to back off without it being obvious that the money comes from me. It'd look real fucking bad. I can't tell Sam I intend to cover the cost either. That would be another kind of fuck up." He falls quiet for a while. Mikey twists in his lap, laying himself belly up, short tail wagging and tongue lolling contentedly as Luci rubs his stomach.

"You heard his apology, right? It did seem sincere didn't it? I have to ask Gabe about the
pranking. Not that it matters, he still hates me. What am I supposed to do? Lose the case on purpose? That’s absurd! I can’t do that. Nevermind my pride, it would be unethical towards my client! He can’t expect me to do that... can he? I’m so under his thumb it’s not even funny, Mikey. I’m so fucking screwed you have no idea.”

Friday night sees a heated discussion at Sam’s place.

"Take the fucking offer, Jo. Sam’s a moron, don’t listen to him!"

"Oh! Oh! So I’m the moron, am I? Are you friggin out of your mind?"

“Am I out of my mind?! Seriously? You two are sitting there like you’ve got the moral high ground on this one. Which you fucking don’t.” Dean gets to his feet, which is never a good sign. Cas remains in his seat beside Jo and the space Dean just vacated on the couch. Sam is currently regretting letting his brother inside his house at all tonight. Dean points angrily at Sam and Jo. “You two. You’re in the fucking wrong in this case, and you’re being offered an out that will save your—” he points at Jo, “—career without repercussions. You don’t get freebies like that very often. All that because Alighieri wants into Sam’s pants. Fucking use that to your advantage!”

“So what? I’m supposed to just trust some hotshot lawyer’s word for—”

“Yes!”

“For fucks sake, Dean! If I pay him off under the table to keep quiet and he double crosses me and doesn’t retract his allegations it’s going to get a million times worse! It’s a lot of goddam money and it’s going to look like I’ve got something to hide,” Jo says angrily.

“—Me and Dean have a nest egg, we’ll help you cover the cost,” Cas says, speaking up for the first time in this discussion at the same time as Dean nearly yells (while wildly gesturing with his hands) “—You do have something to hide!”

“You’re supposed to be on my side, Dean!”

“I am on your fucking side, Jo! This lawyer is known for a lot of things, one of them being that when he says something it comes to pass. You will not be double crossed. That’s why I’m saying. Take. The Fucking. Offer.”

“Dude, you don’t even know this guy,” Sam protests. Cas looks like he’s about to say something but Dean gives him a heated ‘don’t you dare’-stare so he closes his mouth again. “Jo is right. She’ll be screwed to hell if this goes south. Since when are you so friggin’ trusting anyway?” Sam goes on, voice rising to match Dean’s.

“Just fucking trust me on this, will ya? I’ve got a gut feeli—”

“Oh yeah? Just like you had a gut feeling down in Louisiana?” Sam interrupts coldly.

“Don’t you fucking dare bring that up! I was sixteen and stoned to hell! That’s nearly twenty fucking years ago!” Dean is turning red in his face, fists clenched by his side. “And frankly, Jo doesn’t really have a fucking choice. This is fucking giftwrapped! You’ll have to lie your ass off to defend Jo because she did a major fucking mistake. It doesn’t matter if the guy ‘deserved’ it or not. She wants to beat up—”

“I didn’t beat him up…”

Dean goes on, ignoring Jo’s interruption. “—some douchebag she do it out of fucking uniform. Or
better, tell me and I’ll take a baseball bat to his fucking kneecaps! She fucking suckerpunched a
fucking man in handcuffs with no means to defend himself. Worse, she left a fucking mark. This
is not okay at all! When she’s in uniform she represents the fucking law. We’re supposed to be
able to trust cops. Once we’re fucking apprehended and pacified we should not need to fear
fucking assault, Sam! Trust me on this, getting your ass kicked while you’re handcuffed is no
fucking game. You try to defend yourself you’re suddenly ‘resisting arrest’ and things get much
worse! If even good people like Jo do it, then what’s the fucking point of having cops at all? This
isn’t fucking Judge Dredd. Cops are not supposed to be the ones deciding who deserves
punishment and mete it out. That’s why we have courts to begin with!” Dean is trembling, eyes
black and spittle flying. He gestures wildly while he rants. Until tonight he’s been nothing but
supportive of Jo, so this vehemence comes as a shock for the younger girl they both love as a
sister. He’d have her back against anything in public, but now he lets out what he really
thinks, directed towards Sam. “If cops do this then there is no law and they’re just paid fucking bullies.
And if Jo thinks for a minute that what she did was justified, then she fucking doesn’t deserve to
be a cop. She’s a fucking disgrace to the uniform!”

Somewhere during Dean’s rant Sam had gotten to his feet, reacting protectively towards Jo who’s
shrunk in on herself, lips trembling and eyes filling with tears. She’s not one to cry easily and it
gets to Sam. So instead of addressing any of the things in Dean’s speech that has valid points, he
latches onto the last sentence. “Now you sound just like dad when he talked about gays in the
military,” he sneers. It’s a barbed remark and he knows it. Dean actually staggers
backward as if he’d gotten a physical blow, mouth falling open in shock. Sam is too angry to care,
anger rendering logical thinking moot.

Dean collects himself, drawing up to his full height and face twisting to something ugly and
hateful. He is nearly purple in rage now, veins in his forehead popping out and body tense like a
spring. Sam readies himself for a physical fight. It’s not the first time they’ve come to blows
―
the backlash of growing up in an environment where violence is normalised and a go to-solution.
“Fuck you!” Dean spits out. “You can all just burn in hell for all I care!” Then he stalks out of the
room. He leaves the house, slamming the door so hard it nearly comes off its hinges. They hear
the Impala roar to life and disappear down the street.

The silence that lingers in Dean’s wake is thunderous, only thing you can hear is Jo trying to
withhold a sniffle. Sam lets out a breath he was unaware of holding and sits back down.

“That was intense,” Cas says calmly and taps out a message, presumably to Dean, on his phone.
Cas calmness in the face of the gale-force storm of emotion that just took place is almost disturbing
to Sam. But then again, maybe that’s why he and Dean works so well. Dean did have an anger
management problem and to respond in kind like Sam just did was to throw gasoline on a fire.

“That was way out of line,” Sam states. He’s still angry, but the anger is starting to subside into
regret, guilt, and discomfort instead.

“He’s right. I don’t deserve to wear the uniform. I should quit and save everyone the trouble,” Jo
sniffles. Sam instantly moves over to the armrest beside her on the couch and gathers her into an
embrace at the same time as Cas takes her hand and turns towards her.

“No,” Cas says. “What Dean said right now does not match up with what he really thinks about
you. Believe me, Jo. Ever since you got the job I’ve been forced to listen to rants like these almost
weekly about how they treat you and set you up to get hurt or fail. And tomorrow when he’s
calmed down you two will talk. He will tell you this himself. He thinks you’re a good cop, with
the potential to become an exceptional cop. Trust me, Jo,” he says again and pats her hand
consolingly.
Dilemma

Chapter Summary

Lucifer gets an unexpected visitor...

Chapter Notes

A big thank you to Mizz Kitty21 for devoting time of her life to going through and finding some mistakes for me or pointing out things that are unclear. <3 :) 

Any remaining faults should be blamed on me. ^^

Dilemma

Allied reinforcement

Dean: Are you at home?

Lucifer: Yes. Why?

Dean: Waterboarding at Guantanamo Bay sounds pretty awesome if you don't know what either is.

Lucifer snorts in amusement. Dean had recently started texting him randomly. Usually jokes or puns of questionable taste or quality like this one. He always responded in kind.

Lucifer: Hah. Funny. Not to get technical...
But according to chemistry, alcohol is a solution.

Dean: You're a genius. My brother's a moron.
I need booze, lots of it. You're coming with.
No arguments. Pick you up in five.

Lucifer: No! I can't!

Dean: What part of "no arguments" didn't you understand?

And just like that Luci is in a fully fledged panic.

Is he coming here? How the hell does he know where I live?! Even if he knows who I really am my address isn't listed. Shit! Shit! Shit! He's seen the video, he'll know I made it, the moment he steps inside. I'm screwed!
Mikey, who’s been sleeping on the couch since they got home from a long walk twenty minutes ago, lifts his head as Luci starts pacing nervously back and forth in the living room. His ears prick when they hear the rumble of a muscle car close in and pull up on Luci’s driveway. Mikey jumps down from the couch (who knew three legged dogs could move with such ease anyway?) and runs barking towards the door, scrambling through the cat flap before Luci can tell him to stop.

“Mikey, no! Shit!”

For a brief moment Luci is frozen in sheer panic, seeing his house of cards falling down. His heart is beating so hard he hears every beat in his ears. Most of all he just wants to go hide under his bed. Which is what unfreezes him. As always, when he’s scared, nervous, angry, anxious, his go to answer is to ignore or confront—never to hide. The barking has stopped and he can hear Dean’s voice muffled through the door, so he pulls on a pair of downtrodden Timberlands and slips outside, shutting the door firmly behind him.

Dean is sitting indian style in the middle of the walkway, laughing and being slobbered to death by Mikey. Not much of a guard dog, huh? At least you makes a good alarm.

“Heya, Nick! You never told me you have a dog,” Dean says grinning but without taking his focus off of Mikey, scratching and petting with delight and twisting his head trying to evade Mikey’s enthusiastic kisses.

Luci grins in spite of himself. “I’ve had him less than a week. Just took him home from the vet Wednesday evening.” He walks closer and crouches down in front of the pair.

“Oh yeah? What made you choose to get a three legged dog?”

“I didn’t as much choose him as he was chosen for me by the circumstances,” Luci answers and sits down on the gravel, copying Dean’s crosslegged position. Mikey jumps off Dean and excitedly turn to attack Luci with kisses. Luci pushes him off gently but firmly. “No. That’s enough, calm down.” Mikey barks once, runs two mad dash laps around the front yard then clambers back into Dean’s more welcoming lap.

Dean laughs. “Wow. Missin’ a leg doesn’t slow him down one bit, now does it?”

“If it does, I’m shudder to imagine what he was like before,” Luci says dryly.

“Yeah, no shit. So how’d you get him?,” Dean asks as Mikey runs off again, this time to go inside through the cat door.

“You know the dam accident last week?“

“Yeah. I was there helping out with some of my old buddies from the fire station.”

“So was I. Mikey, that’s what I named him, was struggling against the current, tugging a little girl. He went under time after time but refused to let her go. So I swam out and pulled them to safety. The girl’s parents were waiting by the shore and helped lift her up, the mom disappeared instantly towards the medics’ tent. But the father—the gods be damned owner—refused to lift Mikey up on dry land,” the cold anger Luci feels about this bleeds through in both his voice and expression when he talks about it. “He told me to leave the dog. He cared more about losing his house and belongings than the health of the dog that just risked drowning by being determined to save his daughter.”

“You’re shitting me?” Dean looks just as upset as Luci feels when thinking about it.

“No. And poor Mikey’s leg was more or less ground to a pulp. It must have been excruciatingly painful for him. I can’t even imagine how he managed to swim to begin with. I made him a
promise to take care of him for the rest of his life and I intend to keep that promise.”

“Dude! I don’t get people like that. You got a dog, it’s part of the family and you never abandon family. Jeezus!” Mikey comes running back from the house with a ball in his mouth. He drops it in Dean’s lap and looks at him expectantly, short tail wagging eagerly. “Hey little buddy. You’re a little hero, huh? You want me to throw it?” Mikey bounces back a step and goes down in a play bow. “Yeah. I’ll throw it. You ready? Catch,” Dean says and hurdles the ball away, Mikey chasing after it.

Luci watches the interaction with a contented smile. “It gets worse. Once I climbed up the rope ladder with Mikey and stood assessing the damage and what to do about it, the owner comes back, climbs down the ladder and swims out to get a fucking jewelry box. You know how much that pisses me off?” Mikey comes back and drops the ball in Luci’s lap this time. Luci throws it and Mikey’s off chasing again.

“Whoa. A jewelry box you say? Was it green?”

“I think so, yes.”

Dean grins. A dark, vindictive, cruel kind of grin. “Dude’s dead. Maybe he should have checked how well the ladder was anchored before trying to climb it.”

Maybe Luci should be horrified by the revelation, wallowing in guilt for the upgrade in his crime. But he isn’t. There’s just hot fierce satisfaction blossoming in his chest. A smile spreads slowly on his face, just as dark and cruel as Dean’s. “Maybe he did…” is all he says.

He sees on Dean’s face that he catches the meaning behind instantly and for a moment he fears the worst. But then Dean laughs with malicious pleasure and offers his fist for a fistbump. “Fuck, yeah. Great minds think alike.”

Luci sniggers and bumps the fist with his own, something he hasn’t done with anyone but Charlie. He shouldn’t be as excited to see his own vindictiveness mirrored back at him as he is. Not if he was a good man. But he’s as corrupt as anyone and having an ally feels really fucking great.

Mikey comes back with the ball in his mouth but this time when either of them tries to take it he just runs laps around the yard before settling closeby just to chew on the ball. “Hey, isn’t it much more work having a dog missing a leg?” Dean asks curiously.

“I don’t know. Never had a dog before. So whatever he brings will dictate the norm for me.”

“Huh. Yeah, that makes sense.”

“How did you know where I live?” Luci asks Dean. It’s been bugging him all this time.

“I heard you tell the cab driver when we went out drinking,” Dean answers easily and moves to get up.

“Oh.” Luci is 100% sure the cab door was already closed and he’d waved Dean goodbye already. Or rather, he was 100% sure. Now he was only 70% sure. How else would Dean know? If he pushed the issue he’d have to come clean with his name and even then he did have a protected address due to all the threats to his life.

Dean dusts his knees off and holds out a hand to help Luci get to his feet. “Come on. You and me. Lots of alcohol. Now.”

“I don’t know if I can leave Mikey that long.”
“No problem. We can as easily stay here. I got booze in the trunk,” Dean offers breezily with a lopsided smile and almost sends Luci into a panic again.

“No, no. It’s a total mess inside,” he lies. “Wait here, I’ll take Mikey inside and get my coat.”

“A’ight. Hey, Nick. Which of your neighbours do you like best?” Dean asks just as Luci is about to slink through the door and call in Mikey.

Luci points at his elderly neighbours house, as he doesn’t know the new neighbour at all. “Why?”

Dean does a dismissive gesture. “Just wondering. Hurry up.”

Perplexed Lucifer takes Mikey inside and locks the cat door. If Lucy shows up tonight she’ll have to crawl in through the bedroom window. He changes shoes, grabs his phone, wallet, and keys. He tells Mikey to stay when he tries to follow. The dog whines and looks like he’s been kicked. “You can’t come. Don’t look at me like that. You have to be able to spend a couple of hours alone and we’ve just returned from a two hour walk, you should be able to hold it until tomorrow. Oh for the love of—! Bye Mikey, I’ll be back.”

Great. I’m arguing with a dog. Christ! They can really guilt trip you, can’t they?

He slinks out, locks the door and turns around to find Dean gone. Then he hears him and turns his head to find him talking with the neighbour. Both of them smiling. They shake hand and the neighbour turns to give Luci a smile, a wave, and a thumbs up while Dean walks back to Luci’s driveway, motioning for Luci to get into the car. Luci obeys, finding the door unlocked. Soon thereafter Dean slides into the driver’s seat. “What the hell was that about?”

“I explained you were gonna leave your new dog alone for the first time and asked him to keep his ears open. I gave him my phone number. If Mikey throws a barkfest or howls or whatever he’ll give us a call and we’ll cut the evening short,” Dean explains as he starts the car and backs out onto the street.

“That’s… good thinking. I hadn’t even thought of that,” Lucifer says, surprised.

Dean gives him a grin and a wink before focussing on the road. “Yeah. I got that. He told me you’ve barely exchanged a word since the white witch moved out and the red sprite stopped coming.” Lucifer gives a little startled laugh. Most fitting description of Lilith and Charlie he’s ever heard. Dean continues. “He loves your flowers and sits on his back porch every evening to enjoy a cup of tea and the view of your bee garden. Said you throw a couple of handfuls of wildflower seeds into his garden every year when you think he isn’t looking and he loves that. Also, you prune his hedges a bit while you do yours, for which he’s really thankful since he’s got arthritis in his hands and can’t really do it for himself.”

“Christ! I was gone, what? A minute? And you got all that from him?” Luci says flabbergasted.

“It’s a gift,” Dean answers with a cocky smirk and waggles his eyebrows.

“Clearly,” Luci agrees. After a beat he adds “He should have asked me. I’ve tried to do it without noticing, but I don’t mind taking care of his garden too if he wants.”

“Yeah, but he said you’re not exactly approachable and he knows to respect privacy. I’d say you should go talk to him. I think you’ll have a given dogsitter in that guy. I think he’d enjoy it.”

“You’re right. I should. I will.”
“So. Bee garden, huh?”

Luci smiles a bit self-consciously. It isn’t often he talks about it. “Yes. I’ve got two hives and a big bug hotel in the back. And as you discerned from my neighbour, a garden to match.”

“Oh, man. That’s awesome! I’ve got to bring Cas over one day so you can show us. He’s fucking fanatic about bees. I’ve heard more about bees than I’d ever wish to know. Even if I try to ignore him, some things sticks. Did you for an instance know that there are one thousand species of California native bees, 26 of these are bumblebees and most of the rest are solitary bees?”

Lucifer laughs in actual delight and nods. “Yes, I’m aware.”

“I wish I wasn’t,” Dean jokes goodnaturedly. “Me an’ Cas, were saving up to buy a house and I promised Cas that he’d be allowed to design the garden however he wants and get a couple of hives or whatever. As long as there is a space to laze around with friends an’ barbecue an’ stuff.”

“How magnanimous of you,” Luci says with dry humour and raises a sarcastic eyebrow.

“Nah. It’s not like that, okay?” Dean chuckles sheepishly. “It kinda rubs off on ya, right? I mean, Cas is fanatic and when he gets going he lights up from within and just fucking glows. I may not be into it that much, but it’s still interesting.” Dean gestures with one hand as he talks. “So you get sucked into his excitement and before you know it you find your tongue slipping in public by calling a anthophorine bee gorgeous when you see it, or mentioning that you find mason bees extra awesome because they’re green metallic. Yeah. So. You know. But I’m not buying any books about it or anything,” he finishes and rubs his neck, blushing slightly. He’s smiling but keeps his eyes on the road.

Luci grins. “Uh-huh. Admit it, you keep your eyes open for bees when you’re outdoors and you’ve looked up species you don’t recognise on internet.”

Dean blushes one shade darker, his embarrassed grin tells Luci that he has indeed done so. “Have not. Shut up. I’ve got a reputation to uphold.”

Luci laughs and Dean gives him a playful jab in the ribs. “So why are we getting plastered tonight?” Luci asks, rubbing his rib.

Dean has a mood flipswitch and Luci just hit it. Dean’s face turns hard and angry. “Cuz my brother is a fuckwad and said I was just like dad. I’m nothing like dad, okay?” He gives Luci a look before turning his attention back to the road. “I think he just said it to spite me, but fuck! I wanted to plant my fist in his face so bad.”

“And you thought, why not bring your lawyer along and save some time?” Luci jokes with a tiny note of real curiosity as to why Dean promptly wanted him to tag along.

Dean actually laughs. “Dude, no. If I get into a fight tonight I’m kinda expecting you to be swinging right along with me and leg it the hell out of there beside me.” He turns his head to Luci and raises an eyebrow in question.

Luci sniggers. “That is a far more likely scenario, yes,” he admits.

“Yeah. Figured. Saw you building up to it last time we were out. You were just waiting for the
“It’s easier to get off the hook that way. Luckily you chased him off for me. So why did your brother want to spite you?” Luci pushes the topic back on track as they roll into a parking lot by the beach boulevard. There’s a lot of restaurants and bars in this area, so they can pick and choose.

“We were fighting over something completely different. I’m gonna make a short story long, because I need to vent. I’ll tell you as soon as we get our Jesus juice,” Dean says as they park.

Dean leads the way. He chooses a cheap joint that seems to have gone through at least three different interior decor themes over the years but forgotten to throw out previous themes while doing so. The result is a Hawaiian/Texican/English pub which seem to attract only shady people who wants to get drunk cheaply. It’s a lot cleaner than it looks though and the view out from the window by the table they choose is great. Dean orders them two pints of whatever they got on tap and four glasses of Jack, neat. Luci wonders why he orders four until Dean drains one as soon as it’s put on the table.

Fair enough.

“Okay. It’s like this. Sam and I, we got a friend, Jo. We’ve known her for years and she’s like the kid sister we never wanted but love to death, right?” Dean begins. “She always dreamed of becoming a cop and she’s really fucking well-suited for it. She’s got her heart in the right place, brave as fuck, skin on her nose, ability to keep her head cool when the heat is on, and still believes in fucking humanity despite having seen some really fucked up shit.” Dean ticks of each thing on his fingers as he talks.

Luci realises where this is going with a sinking feeling. He’s pretty sure the Jo Dean is talking about is Joanna Beth Harvelle. He’d thought the Harvelle case was just another case for Sam, not that he was defending somebody he considered family. He follows Dean’s example and drains one of the glasses of Jack Daniel’s he has before him. It burns like hell, his face twists into a grimace and he shudders involuntarily. “Oh, fuck.” Dean cackles and reaches across the table to give him a friendly slap on the upper arm. “Sorry. Go on,” Luci bids him once he’s come out of the shock to his body.

Dean grins. “Right. So Jo became a cop. She was in the top half of her class in the academy. She’s wasn’t the top student, that place is forever reserved for my nerdy brother whenever he decides to study something. But she’s good. With the potential to become great. She gets hired as soon as she’s out of the academy and here’s when the problem begins.” Dean pauses to sip his beer, Luci mirroring him. “She gets hired onto a small precinct run by a bunch of misogynistic dudebros who only hires her because they’re ordered to do so, to fill some kind of equality quota.”

Dean starts getting worked up, eyes going intense and face hard, while his voice goes up a notch. “These fuckers believe that women are unsuited to work in the field as cops and set out to prove it. A hard task to do since it’s Jo we’re talking about and she is really fucking well suited for the job. So they give her worse and worse conditions to work under. She’s a fucking pariah down at the station cuz even those that don’t share the bosses point of view, are afraid to piss them off and end up in the same situation as Jo. They keep giving her the worst shifts, sending her to the crappiest cases, and doesn’t let her work with a partner. And by doing so, they not only hamper her growth as a cop since she’s got no one to show her the ropes, they put her in unacceptable. Fucking. Danger!” Dean’s been leaning closer and closer to Luci, poking the table the table with his index finger harshly to accentuate the three last words. Now he leans back with a growl and takes a full swig of his beer.

Luci already know this of course. He’s done his homework. But Dean can’t know that. “For how long has she been working there?”
“Six months.”

“And has she contacted someone for help? The union? Asked for a transfer or applied for any new jobs?”

“Nu-uh.” Dean leans back in again. “She’s just like us Winchesters. She doesn’t bend down when faced with injustice. She figures if she does they’ll win. Claiming she’s some man-hatin’ feminist crying to whoever as soon as she doesn’t get exactly what she wants on a silver platter. Plus, she wants to help people. But she’s not the kind of SJW as my brother is. He wants to help people by changing the society’s foundation and views to the better. She wants to help them mid-crisis. Should she go after her bosses and their misogynic cronies she’s afraid she’ll get saddled with a Judas stamp that’ll follow her throughout her career. Nobody wants to work with a cop that betrays other cops.”

“Pfft. I’m certain they’ve broken a whole host of regulations and laws dealing with her. I could get them fired and possibly jailed if she’d let me.”

“Yeah. I’m sure. Right now that’s not the immediate problem. They finally got the slip up they were looking for. A couple of weeks ago she arrested an aggressive guy who tried to rape a woman and beat the shit out the man that came to the rescue. He was bigger and stronger than Jo and she got him under control anyway, right? But once he was pacified and handcuffed and she was bundling him into the car he tried to lick her. Jo, fed up with his shit, punched him in the face. Bam. Police brutality.”

Luci drinks from his beer. His client claimed she hit him more than once. However, only one punch left a mark and as such could be proven. The black eye she’d given him was nothing but impressive. “Maybe the guy deserved it?” Lucifer says with indifferent voice. He has strong personal opinions about this.

“No fucking way. Nu-uh. This is the part of my and Sam’s argument that caused him to compare me with dad and Jo to cry. Don’t get me wrong. I’m 100% on Jo’s side. Here’s the thing, and this I stand for. No one should need to fear violence from the police once you’re in cuffs and no longer fighting. Their job is not to make assumptions as to who’s guilty and what punishment the suspect deserve. Their job is to apprehend and gather facts so that a judge and a jury can decide. What Jo did was wrong. End of story as far as I’m concerned. The moment you slip on a uniform or flash a badge it’s your fucking duty to uphold the law and see to the safety of everybody, including your suspect. Use force if necessary to catch the guy, but once that’s done, you’re supposed to keep them safe too. If Jo thought her actions were justified I’d say she’d be unsuited to her job. But she’s been beating herself up about it ever since she calmed down that night. So, you know... Personally, I don’t give a fuck what a cop does when he’s off duty, but in uniform it’s another matter.” Dean drains his other glass of Jack and gestures to their server for two more.

The alcohol has started taking hold of Luci now, loosening up his limbs, but it’s not the alcohol that causes that warm fuzzy feeling in his chest. It’s hearing his own opinions reflected back to him from somebody he likes and respects. Luci doesn’t believe in the law per se, but he believes in the idea of the law and how to uphold it. That’s why he’d taken this case without second thought despite not liking the guy one bit. Of course, then he hadn’t known he’d have a personal interest in the opposition counsel. He takes a sip of his own Jack. “So what you’re saying is, if Jo had conducted herself properly but ran into the perp off duty and beat him up, that’d be okay?”

Dean shrugs, gives their server a polite smile when he comes to deliver their whiskey, then turns his attention back to Luci. “Off the record? Well, yeah. Kinda. At least they’d be on equal grounds. He’d be able to defend himself without automatically committing a crime. It wouldn’t be called ‘resisting arrest’, it’d be self defense.”
Luci sniggers and silently mimics the air quotes Dean just did around ‘resisting arrest’.

Dean grins. “Shut up. It’s Cas fault, he does it all the time. Get used to it.”

Luci holds up his hands palms out. “I didn’t say anything,” he says with a smirk.

“Hah. Just you wait. A couple of months in our company you’ll be doing it too.”

“Whatver you say. So. To get back to the subject. You do know a cop is never truly off duty? They’re obligated to interfere if they see a crime even if they’re off the clock.”

“I know. But I wouldn’t hold it against them if they reacted like average Joe unless they got called in. They’re human, not robots. Most cops, most good cops I should say, would have the gut reaction to help anyway, so the point is moot.”

“I’m with you on that.”

“’Course you are. We may not have known each other very long but I know you well enough to see that you and me, we have a very similar way of viewing the law. I see it more like a vague guideline and judge what’s right and wrong by how it feels in here.” He puts a hand over his heart. “It’s put me on the wrong side of the law as often as not. Sometimes by miles because even if I live to help people and got a shitload of empathy for strangers, I’m extremely biased and protective of those I love. There’s literally nothing I wouldn’t do for them. No extremes I wouldn’t go to. You’re the same aren’t you?”

Luci downs the last whiskey and pulls the new glass close to him. He looks down into the golden liquid and smiles sadly, turning the glass round and round. “I think so. Regrettably, I don’t have enough loved ones to test that theory out on.”

“Fine. I can tell you you’re the same. You know how I know?” Luci looks up with his eyebrows raised in question. “Mikey’s owner,” Dean says. “You. Me. The same.” He gestures between them. “Admittedly, I would have gone a much more pugilistic route. But unlike me, you burn cold I think. Whatever. Still the same. Shit. The whiskey is starting to hit. Better finish off my little vent before I get totally derailed.”

“Fair enough. Were there any witnesses? Otherwise she could claim he’s lying and had gotten the injury earlier.” Luci already knows there were, but since Dean doesn’t know he knows, he goes along with it.

“Unfortunately yes.”

“She could claim self-defense. Say that she thought he tried to bite her.”

“Yeah. But here’s where the second part of this circus begins. The real reason we were arguing. Sam had a meeting with the accuser’s lawyer. This guy is good. I mean, Sammy’s good. This guy’s a fucking legend and as soon as Sam knew who he was, he told Jo they couldn’t win and the only thing he could do, was try to limit the damage and act as moral support when the verdict comes.”

The flutter in Luci’s stomach is both happy and uncomfortable. Happy because Sam said that about him, uncomfortable because he really doesn’t want to play the part of someone who crushes Sam and the girl he loves as a sister.

“But this has a twist. Cuz Sam has met this guy before and the guy is into Sam.”

“Sam said that?”
Dean scowls. “No. Cuz my brother’s a moron sometimes and doesn’t believe what’s in front of him. When you listen to Sam describe their encounters it’s clear as a bell that this guy wants to fuck him.”

“Maybe he wants more than that…” It slips out before Luci can think. He’s too comfortable with Dean and the alcohol has definitely gotten to him. His stomach twists anxiously and his heart is beating faster. He seeks shelter in his drink, sipping it. Because everybody knows that the solution for talking out of line while drinking, is drinking some more.

“You think?” Dean goes still and looks at him with such earnest curiosity Lucifer feels obliged to answer. It’s a bit funny that he’s getting the big brother what’s-your-intention-towards-my-brother-speech without Dean even knowing it.

“Yes,” Luci says hesitantly. “From what I’ve gotten to know about Sam, that’s what I’d want. I’d want a lifetime with him, but I’m a realist, so I’d settle for any wayward smile he’d send my way…”

Dean blinks a couple of times, seemingly to process. “Huh. So you don’t think this guy just wants to bone Sam and be done with it?”

Luci snorts. “No. I don’t. But what do I know?”

“Right. Right. Well if you’re right they’re both morons and I’ll tell you why in a bit.” Dean reanimates to his normal state. “Anyway, Sam and he has a meeting and because he’s into Sam he comes with a fucking giftwrapped offer. At least that’s why I think he does it. He tells Sam that if they pay off his client under the table the client will take back the accusations and lie about his own damages. Granted, it’s a hefty sum. It’s more than Jo’d be forced to pay if it goes to court, but it’ll save her career.”

“Why do you think it’s higher?”

“That’s fucking obvious. That’s how this guy managed to convince his client to withdraw.”

Which is exactly how it is. Luci’s client just wants money. He doesn’t care about a rep or whatever and Luci had explained that if they took the offer he’d better hold his side of the bargain or it would have consequences for him that wouldn’t be worth the money. “Sounds logical,” Luci agrees.

“It fucking is. And it’s a shitload of money but we can handle it, alright? I mean, Me n’ Cas, we have the savings for a house. We’ll use those and just wait another couple of years before we buy one. No problem.”

“I’m sure it’d work itself out anyway, without you sacrificing your savings, as long as they say yes.”

Dean makes a frustrated noise out of clenched teeth and rubs his face. “I kept telling them. Take. The fucking. Offer!”

“They’re not going to?”

“No. Most likely not.” Dean scowls and drains another glass of jack. Both their beers have been abandoned in favour of hard liquor and Dean is keeping a frightening pace, Luci half a step behind.

“For the love of—! Don’t they realise this saves her career? That if they’re smart about it they
could use this to get her off the hook then go for her superiors and not only get them fired, but earn Jo some solid compensation for what’s been done to her? She has every possibility to come out of this on top and having made the force a little more equal and humane in the process, depending on who gets to replace her superiors.” Luci feels frustration boil on the inside and follows Dean’s lead, draining his drink and flagging down their server for more for both of them. He’s definitely feeling the buzz. If they keep this up he’ll be wasted by the end of the night. He doesn’t care.

“And that’s why we were arguing. I get Jo’s fear. If she pays this guy to keep quiet and he doesn’t, things get a million times worse for her. But he won’t talk. Firstly, because if he does I personally see to that he doesn’t live long. Secondly, his lawyer is known to be absolutely ruthless, but he’s also known to be a man of his word, for better or worse. He promised Sam. Plus he wants to bone Sam or, or more than that. So it wouldn’t do him any good to fuck him over.”

“Exactly,” Luci agrees.

“Normally I think Sam would come to the same conclusion as I did once he’d calmed down after the meeting. But there are feelings clouding his judgement.”

“He hates the guy,” Luci states morosely.

“*Hates?* Dude, *no,*” Dean sputters then throws his arms wide and look towards the heavens as if asking for patience. He pins Luci with a stare and reaches over to grab his wrist. “Listen to me, Nick. Sam can be suave as fuck and do anything he sets his mind to *unless* he’s into somebody. Then he’s a stuttering second-guessing moron that can’t tell up from down. And Sam is crushing on this guy so hard you wouldn’t believe!”

“He is?” Luci says skeptically while his stomach is doing flip flops and his heart clenches.

“Fuck yeah. He’s been swooning over this guy ever since he saw him save some ungrateful chick from being hit by a car. Believe me, I’m the one he’s come crying to. He’s been putting his foot in his mouth every time he talks to the man. By now he’s so lost that if anything is going to happen between them it’s up to the other guy to take the lead. Watching from the outside it’s almost painful. You just want to—” Dean mimics frustratedly gripping the back of two heads and squishing them together while making kissing noises.

Luci can’t hold back the thrilled laughter bubbling up from within. The very idea of Sam—so out of his league—would be genuinely interested in him is absurd. But maybe not impossible if Dean says so. Either way his hope is soaring. A thought strikes him. “But wait. You said you thought this guy just wanted to fuck your brother and be done with it? Why would you want them to, you know?”

Dean grins. “Dude. Sure, I want Sam to find his happily ever after. But Sam’s been unhappy for a very long time and if this guy can provide distraction from that I’ll deal with whatever. Even if they just fuck to get it out of their system. Who am I to judge, right? If this guy had walked into Sammy’s life five years ago I’d probably put a gun to his head and give him the if-you-break-my-brother’s-heart-speech an’ all. But things have happened an’ I’ve come to conclusions about life an’ shit that I need at least another bottle of booze to dive into, so I’m not gonna. Point is, I think this is just what Sammy needs. Plus, I may be partly responsible for them not gettin’ together right away.”

“How so?”

“Cuz Sam saw this guy rescue this chick and was about to go talk to him when I came by to pick him up. If he’d talked to the guy straight away, before his crush had escalated, maybe they’d be
together by now.”

Lucifer swivels his drink, considering the amber liquor inside while he imagines what might have happened if Sam had followed into the pet store that day. It probably would have gone to hell anyway, but still… “The Jo situation certainly causes a dilemma…” he says.

“That it does…” Dean agrees. They finish their drinks in silence. “Phew. Felt good to get all that crap off my chest. Whatta ya say, let’s skip this joint and move on to the next?” he chirps cheerily once their glasses are empty.

Much later they’re hanging on each others’ shoulders for support, stumbling into their fifth or maybe sixth bar while laughing like teenagers. Luci has just finished telling some hilarious story. “S’riously?” Dean laughs.

“Maybe, maybe not. F’r all you know, I could be lyin’,” Luci grins. They’re both slurring but that doesn’t stop conversation from flowing.

“Luce,” Dean says mock seriously and grabs Luci’s neck to press their foreheads together, lips twitching with effort not to laugh. “Our r’lationship’s based on trust. Not truth.” Then he ruffles Luci’s hair and both of them break down laughing again. Luci’s far too hammered to consider the implications of that statement or even pay attention to the fact that Dean didn’t call him Nick. If he had he wouldn’t have been so shocked later that weekend.
Thoughts of You

Chapter Summary

Sam has some disturbing dreams...

Chapter Notes

**Warnings:**
- Mentions of past child abuse
- Disturbing (for the character) sex dreams

Thoughts of You

Technical Disturbances

The following day is not as torturous as one might expect. Luci comes home with the rising sun, feeling overwhelmed by the actual *screams* of happiness from Mikey. Lucy is at home too so he feeds her and Mikey, then takes Mikey for a walk. He has a leash that he brings along, but he doesn’t use it. The dog follows him anyway and is surprisingly obedient, coming to his side and heels when he calls him in. They walk one of Luci’s shorter running routes. He’s a bit surprised how long it takes to leisurely walk it instead of running. But the dog certainly is happy about 90 minutes of new discoveries so that’s all good.

When they come back he’s practically dead on his feet. He walks over to the neighbour’s house to thank him for keeping an eye on Mikey. He realises he must look like a total wreck, eyes red and bleary, hair a total mess, clothes rumpled. He reeks of alcohol, sweat, possibly weed, and god knows what else, but since he hasn’t sobered up yet he’s unbothered by what the neighbor will think.

The neighbor opens the door, takes one look at Luci and smiles wistfully. “Ah, to be young again...” he says and it makes Luci burst out laughing.

Luci goes on to have the first actual talk with his neighbor—Wayne Jones is his name—he’s had since he moved in. He’s retired and offers to take care of Mikey any time Luci can’t. Apparently he doesn’t leave his house much and loves dogs so it’s no extra bother, even if he warns that Mikey will only get short walks then because of his arthritis. In return Luci offers to fix up Wayne’s garden—an offer that makes Wayne light up like a sun.

Once that’s settled Luci takes a quick shower, drinks a lot of water and eats breakfast. He had left his ‘Sam-phone’ at home yesterday and now he discovers that Sam sent him a message timestamped 03:42 AM.

*Sam:* You never told me how Lucy reacted to the dog...
Luci smiles and his tummy makes those stupid fucking flip flops at the thought of Sam thinking about him in the middle of the night. Never mind that Sam doesn’t know it’s him he’s thinking about. Also, he notes, this is the first time Sam refers to the cat as “Lucy”.

Lucifer: There was a rough patch in the beginning, but Mikey seems to be used to cats so it didn’t take long for them to warm up to each other. Let me show you.

He goes into the bedroom and takes a photo of the two pets then sends it to Sam.

Lucifer: [Picture attached: Lucy and Mikey lie curled up against each other sleeping. They look like a pet reenactment of yin and yang.]

It’s 8:30 in the morning by the time he sends the picture and Luci crawls into bed beside the two furries. He’s asleep within minutes.

Dean is right. He hates when Dean is right. Taking the offer would be the best thing for Jo assuming they could trust Lucifer. Sam really wants to trust the man. Dean’s blind trust for him is perplexing. His brother isn’t gullible. Sam is crushing too friggin’ hard on Alighieri to trust his own instincts, but if he did listen they told him to take the offer. Jo, however, refuses, despite Sam changing his mind and trying to convince her. Whether it’s because she thinks she deserves the repercussions that will come to her if they go to court (very likely), if she truly believes she’ll be double crossed (not as likely when both he and Dean tells her to take the offer), or if she just persists in saying no because Cas offered to use his and Dean’s savings to pay, and she refuses to kill their dreams by taking them up on the offer (also likely)—Sam isn’t sure.

Once Cas and Jo leaves, sleep eludes Sam for a very long time. He’s crushed by guilt. He has a tendency to lash out in the heat of the moment, going for the place it will hurt the most. Like he’d sniped about Lucifer’s name after the meeting, and jabbed at Dean for that stupid thing in Louisiana, and—Oh god, why’d I have to say it?!—comparing Dean to dad. He wished Dean had punched him. He deserved it. On the other hand, if he had at that exact moment, Sam would have hit back and the fight would have lasted until both of them were bruised, battered, and bleeding. It had happened before. Often even, when they were younger. Dad and Dean shared a lot of traits, an explosive temper and flying fists was one of them. For obvious reasons it clashed with Sam’s provoking poisonous tongue. Sam didn’t back off in the face of threats of violence. On the contrary, he’d goad, ignite the powder keg. It had always been like that, even as a child. A lot of dad’s drunken physical abuse would never have happened if Sam had just shrunk away and hid when dad was drunk and haunted by his demons.

For the millionth time Sam thinks he should visit dad in prison. Tell him he’s forgiven him. Ask him if he wants to try to be a father again. If he didn’t? Well then Sam could close the book on that chapter. But if he did, then at least none of them would have to end their life without closure. Also, back when Sam was younger, he didn’t know how totally PTSD could change a man. How devastating grief could be. How mental illnesses could actually be seen on brain scans. He had just been angry. Today he thought that if their dad had just gotten the help he needed, if the marines took care of their veterans instead of leaving them willy nilly to fend for themselves, things would have been different. Dad was sick and caught in a downward spiral that Sam, today, knew all about on a personal level. So while Dean had gone from worshipping their dad for all his good sides (he had a lot of them), to full on hating him, placing all the blame on him for how much their upbringing had damaged them—which probably was Sam’s fault too considering what happened after Brady died—Sam had gone down the other route and forgiven him, placing the blame on a flawed society that turned a blind eye at people in need.
It was a touchy subject between the brothers and he just had to go poke at it, in the worst kind of way. The guilt of lashing out at Dean, of not being able to help Jo, of deliberately making a remark to hurt Lucifer, of having so strong feelings for him when he’d be Jo’s downfall—it all weighted down on him like a lead blanket. He felt like such a burden to everyone around that he cared for.

When he finally sleeps he dreams of Lucifer.

_He must have been staring at the desk too long because the man behind it who’s been eating a salad lowers the fork he was about to put in his mouth and pins him with a cold glare. “Got something to say about my desk, Winchester?”_

_Sam startles. “No. It just wasn’t what I was expecting.”_

_“It’s custom made. What were you expecting?”_

_“Something in line with the rest of the firm's interior. A glass desk perhaps?”_

_Lucifer snorts and leans back in his chair. “Don’t be ridiculous. You’d be able to see my secretary then.”_

_Sam is shocked at the sexist joke. But the secretary answers before he can._

_“Oh, harr harr. Not enough diamonds in the world, Luci,” she says dryly._

_Lucifer grins and looks beyond Sam where the secretary is sitting at her desk. “Lucky there’s a replacement for you right in here,” he says then rolls his chair away from the desk and looks at Sam. “Well? What are you waiting for? Hop to it,” he says with impatience, snaps his fingers and points under the desk._

_One part inside Sam rebels against the order with a burst of anger in his chest, just because Lucifer expects him to obey. That’s not the part in control though. As if in a trance, Sam goes around the desk and crawls under it, settling on his knees. His heart is hammering expectantly and he’s lightheaded. His whole body is tingling in anticipation. Lucifer rolls his chair back, legs falling open to accommodate for Sam. He leans back in the chair to be able to peer at Sam. “Come on. I haven’t got all day,” he says before leaning back out of sight._

_Sam runs a hand over Lucifer’s crotch. He’s hard, so Sam opens his fly and lets the cock spring free. He hasn’t done this since Brady and he’s nervous about not being good enough, not measuring up to Lucifer’s standards. He ignores his own now achingly hard cock and gets to work, swallowing Lucifer down, sucking and licking. He hears the man tapping away on his keyboard and he feels desperate in his wish to get the man’s attention. It’s like Lucifer isn’t even aware of him. Sam whines miserably and throws himself into what he’s doing. Bobbing his head faster, taking it deeper, choking himself, gagging himself on the cock over and over. He’s elated when Lucifer finally moans, leans back in the chair and starts moving his hips rhythmically, fucking up into Sam’s mouth, breath hitching raggedly._

_“Open your shirt, Sam,” Lucifer commands with strained voice. Sam quickly obeys with fumbling fingers. Lucifer rolls his chair back out and gets to his feet, Sam crawling after him trying to catch his cock with his mouth again. “Lean back and close your eyes,” he commands Sam. Sam does. Almost instantly he hears a punched out groan and feels hot come spurt on his face and chest. “Rub it in, Sammy. Rub it in all over.” Sam smears the come over his chests, throat, face, neck. He even runs a hand through his hair. He opens his eyes to find Lucifer looking composed and immaculate, studying him with a content smirk. “Very good, Sam. Now button up your shirt and fix your tie. Then you can go.”_
Anger, sexual frustration, and humiliation wars over control inside of Sam as he starts buttoning his shirt up. “One would think you’d at least have the decency to give me a handjob before throwing me out,” he says bitterly and scowls at Lucifer.

Lucifer tilts his head and looks at Sam with a confused little frown. “I’d give you everything, Sam. But you told me not to touch you…”

Sam awakes with a jerk. He’s so hard it hurts and is leaking precome all over his stomach. He grabs his cock urgently and gives it a couple of firm tugs, the imagined taste and smell of Lucifer still lingering in his senses, and comes hard, making the same punched out sound Lucifer made in his dream. When he comes down, his body is relaxed but he feels just as unfulfilled as in his dream. An unsettled feeling lingers. That was degrading, he thinks and runs a finger through the cooling stripes of come on his belly.

What the hell? That was messed up. I’m going mad. Why did that turn me on?

He grabs some tissues from the box on the nightstand and cleans himself off, throwing the used tissues on the floor to be picked up later. Then he lies staring up at a crack in the ceiling, barely visible in the darkness, thinking about the dream. He thinks that maybe this was one of these complicated dreams where your brain just takes everything that bothers it and does some kind of weird remix. Like, it has taken all the times Sam has messed up and embarrassed himself in front of Lucifer, the feeling of being unfulfilled and powerless he’s had for months, sexual desire, desperation to get noticed, and what? What was the weird smearing come all over about? And him doing it to himself?

Trying to analyze the dream gives him a headache so he lies on his side and tries to go back to sleep, but he can’t. That was some deep psychological bullshit his brain had pulled on him. It didn’t feel like Lucifer either. He wouldn’t be so cold and degrading in that distant way he’d been in the dream. It felt wrong. Sam thinks about “But you told me not to touch you…” and what had happened when he’d told Lucifer not to touch him by the elevator after their meeting. How Lucifer had just yanked his hands away when in reality, all Sam wanted was for the man to touch him.

Great! Now I’m having reverse-consent issues in my sex dreams. Stupid brain.

He turns over to his other side, trying to get his pillow to be lumpy in the right places. Being discarded so coldly hurt. He thinks maybe that’s all Sarah’s fault. He doesn’t get it. She’d said she loved him, then just like that, she’d left. From one day to another. Sure, she’d been offered her dream job and all but it’s not supposed to be that easy. They had a friggin house and a cat together. A life. Together!

There’s a ball of indignant rage growing in the pit of his stomach. He’s tried to quench it any time he’s felt it before. Been happy for her. But now he’s angry on his own behalf. He sits up and grabs his phone, finding Sarah in the phonebook and hits dial before he can change his mind. The phone rings a couple of times before going to voicemail. It’s about lunchtime in London right now, but he wouldn’t have cared if it was the middle of the night. “Hi, it’s Sam. I’ve tried to be happy for you, Sarah, but you know what? Fuck you. It was a really shitty thing you did, leaving like that, on such a short notice. You didn’t even leave me time enough to get my economy in order before you just took off. So fuck you very much! You don’t do that if you care for someone, okay? Don’t bother calling back. I’m deleting your number. Goodbye, Sarah. Have a nice life,” he spits out bitterly and hangs up, promptly deleting her contact like he said he would.

He sits up staring at his phone for a moment, waiting for the familiar guilt and regret to start crawling inside of him, but it doesn’t come. Instead he feels lighter. Purified, if you can call it that. It’s the first time he’s truly allowed himself the right to be angry, to feel wronged, and it feels like
a little part of him that’s been twisted the wrong way for a long time suddenly snapped back into it’s place.

He lies back down again, dropping the phone on the bed beside him. Within minutes he’s asleep.

_They’re at the outdoor gym, lying on the boarded ground again. “Look. About the Harvelle case—”_

“Nu-uh.” Lucifer rolls onto his side and puts a finger against Sam’s mouth, half leaning over him, face so friggin close, and Sam’s world jolts into butterflies and rapid heartbeats. “No work talk now, Winchester. I value my free time too much.” He pauses without removing his finger from Sam’s lips, eyes trailing all over Sam’s face and the corner of his lip is quirked upward just the tiniest fraction. Sam parts his lips and flicks his tongue over Lucifer’s finger. Lucifer’s breath hitches and his eyes widens in surprise, jumping up to Sam’s in question. Sam smirks challengingly, small and lopsided. Lucifer removes his finger, looks down on Sam’s lips, wets his own and leans in slowly while looking back up in Sam’s eyes to gauge his reaction. Sam closes the gap, finally, finally getting to kiss the man. His lips are soft and pliant. They part easily to allow Sam to dip his tongue in and a whimpering noise, that goes straight to Sam’s toes, escape him. He tastes perfect. Sam slips his arms around him and flips them over, suddenly overcome by previously held back hunger.

“Lucifer…” he mumbles between kisses and slots himself between the other man’s legs. Lucifer’s hands stroke up and down his back under his tee greedily and he bucks his hips into Sam’s, grinding their cocks together through their sweat pants. It’s electric. He sees his own state of arousal and want reflected in Lucifer’s lust blown hooded eyes, red cheeks, and spit slicked lips.

Sam’s wide awake again, hard and leaking precome, again. “What the hell?”

_Sure, I’m sexually frustrated, but this is just absurd!_

Sex dreams are a rare occurrence and now he’d had two in one night. At least this one wasn’t fucked up. He jerks off to the lingering images of Lucifer’s aroused state and how good it felt rutting against him. It doesn’t take long to come for the second time. He doesn’t feel as unfulfilled this time, just has the hollow feeling you get when you find yourself wanting something currently out of reach. Once he’s cleaned himself up his mind annoyingly enough keeps circling around Lucifer.

Hoping for distraction he grabs his phone and shoots off a text to the only one who seems to be able to distract him from the famous lawyer.

_Sam: You never told me how Lucy reacted to the dog…_

He waits for a bit, vainly hoping for an answer. It’s 03:42 AM, of course it doesn’t come. Whoever sends a text to a stranger at this time anyway? _Sam the mess Winchester, that’s who_, he thinks. He wonders if Mystery Man is going to be pissed off about it. He realises he doesn’t care.
Lucifer goes to get a cup of coffee at Gabe's. He gets a surprise while there...

Once again, thank you to the wonderful help from Mizz_Kitty21, who's corrected some of my mistakes and helps me view the story from another angle. :D

What's a Squish?

Ambushed!

Luci steps inside Gabe’s coffee shop at 5:38 PM, Saturday evening, looking down at Mikey trying to squirm in by his feet and sniffing the air.

“Hello-ee, Luci boy!” Gabe’s familiar voice greets him.

“Luci, huh? I’ll go for that. Heya, Mikey.” Dean’s voice however, is unexpected and makes Luci’s head snap up and Mikey to hurry past him to greet Dean enthusiastically. Dean is hanging off of the counter by his elbows facing the shop, legs splayed in a decadent scene and sporting a lopsided smirk.

Beside him the medic from the parking lot—Cas—lights up at the sight of Mikey trying to climb up Dean’s leg and exclaims “Little bee!” He goes down to his knees to greet his former patient and Mikey turns his attention to Cas instead.

Lucifer’s pulse sky rockets, a ball of ice forms in his belly. The urge to flee is enormous. Here’s where his house of cards finally falls. Mechanically, full of dread, he enters and walks towards the counter. Both Gabe and Dean is smiling at him. “Thanks for yesterday, Lucifer. I had a fucking blast,” Dean says and straightens up, turning to Cas. “Cas. This is who I told you about, my future brother in law.” He looks at Luci. “Luci, meet my better half, Castiel.”


Autopilot is a handy thing when your earth moves beneath your feet. It allowed Luci to appear calm when his father said "You are no longer a son of mine. If you leave now you're never welcome back to this family." It allows him to appear calm and unruffled now, despite reeling in confusion. "Sam hasn’t been consulted on the matter yet, Gabe,” he says with a little smirk then extends a hand to Cas. "Nice to see you again, doc."

Cas gets to his feet and shakes his hand with a gummy grin on his face. "A pleasure to finally
meet you, Lucifer. Dean and Sam have told me so many good things about you. ...or do you prefer to be called Nick?" he adds with a thoughtful squint and a head tilt.

"Call me Lucifer or Luci, please. And the same. To hear Dean tell it, you're the angel who hung the moon."

Cas chuckles warmly. "That’s amusing. I am convinced he's responsible for that particular piece of aerial decor."

"Pffhah! I'm a lot of things, babe, but angel ain't one of them," Dean says, sounding rather proud of the fact. Then to Gabe, "So you know Luce, huh?"

"Hells yeah, I do. We’ve been friends for years. He’s the one that saved my shop when I got started and stepped into some contractual problems. All for the price of free coffee for a couple of months."

Lucifer leans into Dean’s space, near his ear. "How long have you known?" he asks in a silent hiss.

Dean sniggers. "Since you took Sammy to Sunshine. Oh and that video you sent with Lucy? Dead giveaway. What with pics of Charlie on the walls an' all."

"You know Charlie?"

"Yeah. Met her on a train and it was geek at first sight just like you and me." Dean winks.

"And you’re not mad at me for lying about who I am?"

"Technically you never lied, just withheld some information. And like I told you yesterday—our relationship is based on trust, not truth."

Lucifer lets out an incredulous laugh and looks at the three men smiling at him then turns serious, looking at Dean. "It doesn't change the fact that I'm obligated towards my client to do my best if Jo's case goes to court. I gave him my word. If they don't take the offer you've got no cause to be benevolent towards me. I'm not going to lose."

Dean does a dismissive gesture. "Minor setback that will right itself in the long run. The important thing now is to get you and Sam together. And I told you yesterday that it's up to you to make it happen. Don't worry, I'll coach you through it."

"Dee is quite meddlesome, if you are yet to figure that out. And he does love to play matchmaker," Cas says with a fond smile, having lifted Mikey off the ground to cradle him to his chest.

"Does Sam know it's me behind the messages his cat brings?" Lucifer asks.

"Nope. And I ain't gonna tell him. He'll have to figure it out by himself or he might freak out. My brother is a bit tricky."

"You’re one manipulative little shit," Luci tells Dean with a bemused smile, counting the days backwards. Dean had known when they ate lunch together. He’d known yesterday when he talked about Jo’s case, Sam’s supposed crush on Luci, when he inquired about Luci’s intentions towards Sam. He’d known when… nevermind. It doesn’t matter. Bottom line is that Luci has fretted his ass off about him finding out something he already knew and to all appearances didn’t care jack shit about.
"Like I said," Dean sing songs. He leans in conspiratorially and gestures between them. "You. Me. The same."

"So you coming tonight?" Gabe prompts and hands Luci one of his special random concoctions.

"Course he is!" Dean dictates.

And that's how Lucifer finds himself having dinner at Gabe’s along with Cas and Dean some time later. It's both overwhelming and really enjoyable. Mikey is happily playing with Kali’s two fat bichon frises. Why they're fat becomes obvious because Gabe keeps sneaking all the dogs scraps from his plate. Dean and Gabe seems to have some kind of love/hate relationship and gets into arguments all the time. It’s funny, because most of the time they have the same opinions yet their arguments get really heated. The night doesn’t end there. Cas is really excited about Luci’s bees so he invites Cas and Dean over to his place when they leave Gabe’s. While Dean is extroverted and exuberant in his ways, with whiplash moodswings, Cas is deceptively mild mannered and quiet. He watches and listens mostly, asking the odd question now and then. Just like Dean said, when Cas sees his garden with it’s hives he lights up and he starts talking a mile a minute. Then it’s Dean’s time to quiet down and just (trying not to) listen while sniggering at them for geeking out. Back inside he shows them around, glowing with pride inside, as they compliment the furniture he’s built himself. He never tells them he built the furniture though. He even shows them Charlie’s room, unchanged since the day she left. He only ever goes in there once a month to clean it.

He shows them the bedroom where Dean has a laugh about the now framed photo of Sam on his nightstand. Lucy and Mikey are both in the bedroom and somehow they end up in his bed. Luci and Cas sitting leaned against the wall, each on one side of the bed, while Dean lays with his head in Cas lap and his legs over Luci’s. Dean is petting Mikey, Luci has Lucy in his lap, and Cas is carding through Dean’s hair. Something has been bugging Luci all night and he asks Dean about it. “Don’t you feel bad about lying to Sam?”

"Dude. I've been lying to Sam my whole life. Seriously, I've had to. My brother went into law to help people and change things for the better. But I've been providing for him, the only way I could back then. The way dad taught me. He had me help him rob a liquor store when I was 10 and I continued down that line. Armed robbery, shoplifting, hustling pool, everything and whatever. Sam knew that I did some shady stuff, but not what. We have this don't ask, don't tell going on. I played the demon so he could be a saint. By now lying to him is second nature."

"But he got a full ride to Stanford. Did you still...?" Lucifer inquired without judgement.

"Not as much. But you remember the lawyer who gave me a second chance? I decided to get a degree of my own. Nothing prestigious but I took evening classes and shit at a nearby community college. I realised that even if Sammy’s the smart one I'm not dumb. I could do better in life. Then I got a job as a fireman and my days as a criminal were done.” Cas snorts and Dean amends. "Okay fine. Mostly done. How bout you, Luci? You got any skeletons in the closet?"

Lucifer chuckles. "Are you asking if I got a wrap sheet?"

"Nah. I had a friend who's an FBI agent check you up so I know you don't. That's how I got your address by the way."

Lucifer laughs. "Oh boy. I should be mad but I got Bela to do a file on Sam and by proxy, you, so I guess we're even. But yes I suppose I have a couple of skeletons lurking. Frighteningly many of those are followed by excuses like 'I was drunk, it was comic con, and Charlie suggested...' Apart from Charlie induced shenanigans it's mostly violence though. I've been in more fights than I can count over the years. I have even started a few."
"You don’t strike me as a violent man," Cas says.

Luci shrugs. "I avoid it if I can. But children are cruel and adults even more so. I defend myself. My very existence is provocative to many. And I do have a vindictive streak a mile wide."

"Did they tease you about your name as they did me?" Cas asks gently.

"Now what on earth makes you think that?" Lucifer says sarcastically and chuckles.

"I think your name is awesome," Dean says. "The fucking archangel of free will. The first one to recognise and defy slavery. The first one to bid man to think for themselves, to educate themselves, and make their own decisions. The first one to stand up to a shitty parent and demand to be seen as an individual, worthy of love even when he didn’t conform to his daddy's demands and expectations. Brave enough to speak up against injustice. And what did he get? Thrown in locked isolation ward for eternity while God's PR department pins every ugly deed ever committed to him and he’s helpless to stop it. Dude’s gonna be pretty pissed once he breaks free."

"Wow. I've heard people think my name is cool before, but always within the realm of 'Satan, the all-powerful prince of darkness'."

"Dude. The guy’s name is literally light bringer. As in bringer of light. Personally I like to think of it as a metaphor of enlightenment and education, what with the apple and the tree of knowledge an’ all. Plus if he brings light he makes it possible to see where the true shadows lurk, something you can’t see in the dark. And let me tell you that the church casts a pretty goddam big shadow. They are responsible for a shitload of suffering, war, and unjust persecution, yet they claim to be the good guys."

"Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition," Cas deadpans, making all three of them laugh.

Lucifer looks at Dean with a fascinated little smile. "Charlie had a word for what you are to me," he states.

"Oh yeah? What's that?"


Cas looks confused but Dean bursts into delighted laughter. "Yeah, you're my squish too, Luci boy. Silly fucker. If there ever was any doubt about you an' C being friends you just killed them."

"What’s a squish?" Cas asks with a perplexed squint.

"Um. 'S like the friend version of a crush. No sex and romance, but still the same. You know, but platonic?" Dean explains.

"Oh. That’s nice," says with a content little smile. Lucifer thinks he's a rare man. There’s no hint of jealousy. Cas just seems genuinely happy about the friendship that has evolved between his boyfriend and Lucifer.

"Yeah it is. I told you Cas, this guy’s perfect for our family. He and Sam are fucking MFEO. And when you an' Sammy are busy working or whatever I can hog Luci boy and raise some hell. Pun intended." Dean chuckles at his own joke.

Luci still finds it baffling that Dean thinks he stands a chance, but Dean’s very convincing. Dean tells him, whatever happens, keep up the texting conversation with Sam. They’re little highlights of his day. Of course he will.
They end up staying the whole night and staying for breakfast. Thankfully there's no alcohol involved or Luci would be dead. He's not 20 anymore and two all nighters in a row is pushing his limits, even if he can sleep during the day. When they leave Luci is emotionally exhausted and suffering from sensory overload, something that happens when he’s put in intense prolonged social situations he can’t control. Even if it was good and he is happy about it. He shoots off a text to Sam, just something mundane, before he passes out on the couch.

**Lucifer:** The problem with the murder plotting cat is solved. Just get a dog and she’ll sleep on it instead. Thanks for the shoebox tip. It worked.
Chapter Summary

Sam is torn. He can't get Lucifer out of his mind. Well, he can. One person can distract him. Lucky the Mystery Man is there to answer every text Sam sends his way.

Chapter Notes

I know I keep saying it, but a huge thank you to my Beta, MiZZ_Kitty21, and also you guys for reading and commenting. <3

Chapter seen mostly from Sam's phone. Also, to brush up your memory, Lucifer signed the notes he sent with Lucy as "L".

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Texting

Enemy engaged

Monday

“Alighieri speaking.”

“Hi, Mr. Alighieri. This is Winchester, about the Harvelle case…”

“Mr. Winchester. I’ve been waiting for your call. Have you made a decision concerning my offer?”

“We have. And we are declining.”

“Winchester, please. Think this through. For the good of your client—”

“Lucifer. I can’t say yes because it’s not my decision to make. I did bring the offer to Harvelle. We discussed it thoroughly, she said no and that’s final.”

“... I’m really sorry to hear that, Sam.”

“Um, yes, well… Right. So. I’ll see you at court then, I guess.”

“Good guess.”

“Goodbye, Lucifer.”
“Bye, Sammy.”

Sam stares at the phone. It had taken him an hour to gather courage to make the call. Lucifer had haunted his every dream all weekend. It wasn’t all sex dreams—thank God—but he was part of every friggin dream somehow. And too many of them had erotic overtones. It isn’t right that his palms should be so sweaty and his heart beat so fast, just because he made a phone call less than a minute long. This crush was doomed from the start. He might as well try to get over it. But so hard to do when Lucifer called him Sammy and made it sound affectionate.

Tuesday

The good thing about obsessing about Lucifer is that he overshadows all of Sam’s other problems. The bad thing about it is that he can’t seem to focus on much else. There is only one thing that can distract him. He decides to use that distraction to the maximum.

Sam: Do you have any favourite quotes?

L- Mystery Man: Beauty awakens the soul to act.

Sam: Dante...

Of course it had to be Dante Alighieri. The irony of it makes Sam laugh humorlessly.

L- Mystery Man: You've got a problem with Dante?

Sam: Can't say that I do.

L- Mystery Man: Well I do. In general, if somebody tries to tell me who’s going to hell or not I’ll have a problem with them. But that particular quote does hits home for me.

L- Mystery Man: Another one then; "If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?"

Sam: Einstein!

L- Mystery Man: Very good, Sam. You've done your homework. Clearly you're not as illiterate as you would have me believe in our first exchanges.

Sam: And you are not an emo girl, as you led us to believe, so I guess we're even.

L- Mystery Man: You’re making me laugh, Sammy. You believed I was an emo girl? Why?

L- Mystery Man: And who are "us"? Any girlfriend or boyfriend lurking in the shadows that I should worry about? Someone that will steal your phone, find our texts, and come after me with a shotgun?

Sam: Yeah. We did. I think it was the name you gave Mimi combined with the go-fuck-yourself attitude that made the jump to sassy girl with lots of makeup, dark hair, and equally dark world view, easy to make. And by we I mean my brother and me.

Sam: Also, no. The position of significant other half is open still.
L- Mystery Man: Why Sammy. It would be awfully rude of me to tell you to go fuck yourself. I’m not so selfish as to force you to toil on that task alone. I’m more than happy to offer a helping hand in such activities.

Sam laughs. So Dean is definitely right about mystery man hitting on him. Grinning he taps out an answer and sends it at the same time as his phone dings, proclaiming another incoming message.

Sam: Now. Thanks. Truly magnanimous of you. -.-’

L- Mystery Man: In that case I better start working on my application. But who to use as references? Exes are generally not very keen on giving outstanding reviews after they’ve gotten dumped. This is a problem I will have to consider...

Sam feel a bit chicken about rebuffing the come on like that, especially when he’s sitting with a dorky smile on his face and kind of wants him to continue. He likes the humour with which mystery man writes, even if he does come off like an arrogant ass at times. And he writes such long texts, using proper punctuation but no smileys or emoticons. Sam is really curious about him.

Sam: If it makes you feel any better all my exes are dead except one, and she hightailed it to London first chance. So I won’t get any outstanding reviews either...

Why did I write that? Seriously, I’m trying to scare him away on purpose, aren’t I?

L- Mystery Man: That statement doesn’t make me feel any better. It did however make me laugh loud enough to startle my dog. I beg forgiveness. I don’t take enjoyment from your suffering, it was just unexpected and Henry VIII came to mind. But I’m sure you are not truly in the habit of beheading your lovers.

Sam chuckles at the dark humour.

Sam: Not yet at least. Maybe I should consider it as a preemptive measure in the future? ;) No. I think I’m cursed.

L- Mystery Man: May I inquire as to what happened to make you think so?

Sam: My first love, Jess, died in a fire when I was 13. At 17 Madison died from rabies. At 20 Amy was stabbed. Not by me I might add. Amelia at 23, car crash. Brady at 25, was tortured, and got his throat slit. Again, not by me. Then Sarah got a job offer in UK and left four months ago.

It takes time before the response comes this time. Sam wonders if it is a mistake telling L about this. He rarely talks about it. But mystery man is a faceless stranger and it is easier to tell him this than it is talking about it face to face with someone.

L- Mystery Man: I’m having very mixed feelings about this Sam. The amount of heartbreak you’ve gone through is more than any good person should have to be subjected to in a lifetime. It makes me very sad to hear this. I feel for you.

L- Mystery Man: At the same time this means you’re
Sam snorts. The guy’s honest in a way you’re not supposed to be when you hear things like this. Sam doesn’t feel offended though. He begins to type “You and me both…” but changes his mind. Joking about it makes the old grief lighter to bear, but not everybody has dark enough humor to handle that. The few times he’s cracked jokes about it he’s gotten horrified gasps (not from Dean though. Dean is a master of humour as a coping mechanism) and been accused of being cold hearted, and as a result toiled under extra guilt about it.

Sam: So you’d feel better about it if my single status was voluntary, let’s say, the same way Henry VIII’s was? ;)

L- Mystery Man: Funny. Yes. Much better. I’d be protected by the universal it-won’t-happen-to-me-spell. Isn’t that right, Sammy?

Sam laughs, imagining the statement coupled with a wink. Relieved. It’s not like his losses does not still cut like knives and he still believes that somehow it must have been his fault. But Sarah is alive so maybe the curse is broken and joking about it puts some distance between the past and present, makes life a bit easier.

Sam: Of course you would. And don’t tell anyone, but I kinda like your harassment. ;)

Wednesday night

His dreams are warped. He’s in a courtroom, naked. Of course he’s naked. Like it wasn’t bad enough already. The jury is laughing at him and Jo is being dragged away in an orange prison jump suit, screaming “It’s your fault! You let him win! You let me down!”

“I gave you a chance, Sam. You should have said yes.” He turns around to find Lucifer standing with an arm across his chest and pulling his lip thoughtfully with the other. It’s raining confetti around him. (Confetti? Really? At least he knows it’s a dream or this would have been too absurd.) “I’ll give you one more chance before I lose interest. Have dinner with me?” Lucifer tilts his head and waits for an answer. Sam opens his mouth to say yes but finds that he is gagged and can’t talk. Lucifer looks disappointed and shakes his head. “Goodbye, Sam,” he says and turns to walk away. Sam tries reaching for him to stop him, but finds his hands handcuffed behind his back with Jo’s handcuffs.

Sam wakes up with a jerk. Goddam Lucifer just won’t leave him alone at night. He closes his eyes trying to go back to sleep. It’s futile. He tosses and turns for about 20 minutes when he gives up and reaches for his phone.

Sam: Have you ever gotten totally obsessed with someone you know you don’t have a chance with but you can’t get them out of your mind?

L- Mystery Man: Sure. A bitch in college and now you, Samwise.

Sam: Why are you even awake right now??? It’s 3 AM. I didn’t expect an answer right away!

L- Mystery Man: Somebody sent me a text that woke me up, jackass.
**L- Mystery Man:** Well then, I’m sorry to disappoint you with my prompt answer. I could ask you the same question by the way. Why ARE you awake at 3 AM?

**Sam:** Oh no. I didn’t mean to wake you. I’m sorry. I feel guilty now. Last time I sent you a text in the middle of the night you didn’t answer until the morning so I thought you switched to silent during night. I suffer from insomnia. And lately I’ve been plagued by dreams that wake me up once I do fall asleep.

**L- Mystery Man:** I hope you can see my eye roll from here, Sammy. Stop being a moron. There is this thing called free will. I CHOSE to keep my phone on. I CHOSE to answer your text right away. I take full responsibility for my own choices like the adult I am. Why don’t you do the same and save your guilt and regret for when you actually hurt someone?

**L- Mystery Man:** Believe me, I’m very adept at ignoring people should I wish to.

**L- Mystery Man:** Who knows? Maybe last time I left my phone at home and was out “cheating” on you with that notorious brother of yours you keep mentioning all the time?

**L- Mystery Man:** And I’m sorry to hear that. I’ve been subjected to insomnia at times in my life too. It’s no game. Fucks you up rather bad.

**Sam:** Yeah, right. Actually... I think you and Dean would make great friends if you met.

**L- Mystery Man:** You don’t say.

**Sam:** Wait a minute. Obsessed with me? You’re not serious.

**L- Mystery Man:** I’m not? Thanks for informing me, I thought I was. But what do I know about what I’m thinking of?

**Sam:** You’re a grumpy flirt.

**L- Mystery Man:** 50 bucks says you’re smiling either way, Samson.

**Sam:** Where do I send the check? ;)

**L- Mystery Man:** Unless it’s personally delivered I don’t want it. Now as much as I enjoy getting my sleep disrupted, I do have to get up early in the morning. So is there a point you aim to make or can I go back to sleep?

**L- Mystery Man:** I repent. What do you want, Sammy? Can I help you somehow?

**Sam:** You already did. Thanks. Goodnight, L

**Sam:** What’s your name?

**L- Mystery Man:** Goodnight, Sammy.
Thursday lunchtime

Sam: Have you got any tattoos?

   L- Mystery Man: Yes. I’ve got a tramp stamp on my lower back. How about you?

Sam: A tramp stamp? Really?

Sam: No, not yet. Me and Dean were planning on getting matching tats but something always comes up so we haven’t gotten around to it yet.

   L- Mystery Man: Why do you always question everything I say, Sam?
   Yes. A tramp stamp. In my defense - I was drunk and it was comic con.

   L- Mystery Man: What are you going to get and where?

Sam: Hah! I’ve heard that excuse before from one of Dean’s best friends. :)

Sam: We had this favourite comic that Dean used to read to me when I was little. It’s about two monster hunting brothers and they have these anti-possession tattoos over their hearts. We’re gonna get those.

   L- Mystery Man: Like Jared and Jensen’s tats in Unnatural?? Fuck, Sam. That’s so hot. Is money the problem? If it is, tell me! I’ll pay for it if you just send me a picture of the result!

Sam: lol! Such excitement. ;) You’ve read the comics then I surmise? :D

   L- Mystery Man: I own every issue. Those comics have influenced my way of thinking more than I care to admit.

Sam: Can you send me a pic of your tattoo?

   L- Mystery Man: No. You want to see it, I’ll show you in person.

Sam: Can you at least tell me what you’ve got?

   L- Mystery Man: A brilliant star surrounded by three pair of wings.

Sam: Sounds hot. I think tattoos are sexy. ;)

   L- Mystery Man: Lucky me.

Sam: Why did you chose that motive?

   L- Mystery Man: That’s a riddle for another day. I have a meeting in a few minutes. Bye, Sam.

Thursday evening

Sam is standing in front of the mirror after his shower, looking at himself. He actually thinks he looks rather good. It makes him think of the clip mystery man sent him when he was lying in bed
with Lucy (Mimi dammit! Oh what the hell.) over his head. It’s funny, he thinks, that this man has gotten under his skin just by using messages of different kinds. He may be crushing on Mystery Man too, despite never having met him. He didn’t even think it possible to crush on two people at the same time. Well, he is. He’s fallen for the impatient sarcastic snark—bordering on rudeness—the long well articulated texts, the personality he shows, making no excuse for himself. They’ve been texting daily. Any time Sam’s mind had circled back to Lucifer he shot off a text to mystery man and got a response. It worked as a prime diversion and now he found himself smiling excitedly every time the phone chirped.

Mystery man flirted with him. Bluntly—fuckboy style—by all means. But he never seemed to care whether Sam flirted back or not. Sam tries, but isn’t very good at it. He gets too shy. Maybe you need to be blunt when you text? Sam isn’t sure if mystery man (who still refused to tell Sam his name despite being asked four times already) breezed over his feeble attempts to flirt back because he didn’t pick up on them, because he didn’t care, or because he didn’t take them seriously.

Sam: My brother thinks you've got a hot bod.

L- Mystery Man: ...

L- Mystery Man: Is he single?

Sam: No.

L- Mystery Man: Then what's the point of telling me, Sammy?

L- Mystery Man: Is it to taunt me with the fact that you have an unfair advantage, having seen my body when as far as you know I still don't have a clue what yours look like?

L- Mystery Man: What your brother thinks of my body is of no importance anyway due to him being spoken for. What do you think of my body, Sam?

L- Mystery Man: Rhetorical question. You don't need to answer that.

On impulse Sam snaps a picture of himself in the mirror and hits send.

Sam: [Photo attached - Sam is standing in front of a mirror only wearing a towel. His head isn't visible except from a part of his chin.]

Sam: There. No more unfair advantage. And... my brother knows what he's talking about.

There is no immediate answer and Sam starts fretting.

Sam: Hello? You still there?

Sam: Oh god. Did I step over a line I shouldn't have? I'm sorry. I thought. I don't know what I thought. That was highly inappropriate of me. Now I feel stupid.

L- Mystery Man: Oh shut up, Sammy. I'm trying to order a giant print out of that to tape to the ceiling over my bed.

Sam lets out a relieved laugh. Butterflies flying around in his belly.
L- Mystery Man: You can't just blast me with something like that and expect me to form coherent adult sentences directly afterwards.

L- Mystery Man: And I don't mean 'Adult' as in rating. That I could do.

L- Mystery Man: Why not even it up a little bit more. I sent you a video after all...

Sam: You want me to send you a video?

L- Mystery Man: I want you to send yourself in a giftwrapper, but I'll settle for a video.

Sam: ...a video of me doing what exactly...?

L- Mystery Man: Knitting for all I care, just as long as you keep that shirt off.

Sam: [video attached, camera held so Sam's head still isn't visible. He's standing with his back to the mirror and the the camera is directed downward on his body, to the knot of the towel where his free hand is rested. The camera pans upward along his stomach and chest, then over his shoulder filming the mirror, showing his back. Slowly the towel begins to drop lower, revealing the upper part of his ass before the video cuts out.]

Sam’s heart flutters nervously in anticipation of the answer. It’s easier to send pictures and videos than trying to write flirty texts. He may be an adept Internet user but he only used it to seek information. He never understood how teenagers, or adults for that matter, could be coaxed into sending compromising pictures to strangers online until now. He feels flattered, given a huge confidence boost, and frankly a little turned on by mystery man’s reaction. Add to that that he’s at home in a safe space and that he’s been talking to the man often enough to feel like he knows him and trusts him. It doesn’t feel so out of line to give him what he asks for. It’s not like it's much of a difference than bringing home a stranger for a one night stand, is it?

L- Mystery Man: Christ, Sammy! Are you trying to kill me?

Sam: Ha ha. I feel like a teenager being lured by a predator on the internet to put on a livestream.

L- Mystery Man: Excluding the teenager part you may not be far off.

L- Mystery Man: I’ve been single for a very long time, Sam. If anyone is reacting like a teenager - it’s me.

Sam: Oh yeah? Are you ‘bad touching’ yourself, L? ;)

L- Mystery Man: Tell me, Sam. Where on a scale of ‘help-I-need-to-switch-phone-number-and-move-right-now-so-this-creepy-asshole-will-never-find-me-again’ to...

L- Mystery Man: [mp3 file attached: Bad things – Jace Everett]

L- Mystery Man: ...would you be if I am ‘bad touching’ myself while looking at you?
Sam listens to the song with a big grin on his face. His cheeks feel hot. He goes to the bedroom and lies down on top of the bed, tapping out an answer.

**Sam:** Honestly?

**L—Mystery Man:** No. Lie to me, Sam. Yes of course honestly, jackass!

**Sam:** Okay. ;) I lean towards the ‘I wanna do bad things with you’ part of the scale.

**L—Mystery Man:** I’m going to go ahead and take that as you consenting to have the lead role in any fantasies I may have while pleasuring myself. Or am I misreading your response?

Who on earth needs consent to fantasise? If there's one place you're allowed to do what you want it's in your head. Sam thinks about the man stroking himself while picturing Sam in his mind. The idea is a major turn on and his cock begins to stir.

**Sam:** No you’re not.

**Sam:** It kinda turns me on. You thinking of me, while you jack off.

**L—Mystery Man:** That’s good. Because you practically drive me mad. I’m rock hard right now.

Sam’s hand has wandered down to stroke himself lazily, cock filling, hardening to full mast.

*I can’t believe I’m doing this!*

He’s suddenly nervous that L is leading him on. That it's only Sam who’s aroused by this. That L is just saying this to mess with him. It'd be humiliating if that is true.

**Sam:** Prove it.

**L—Mystery Man:** I can’t send you dick pics, Sam. I’ve got a reputation to uphold.

**Sam:** Pfft. Now you sound like my brother. I’m not going to spread any pics of you. Sides, my brother would kick my ass if I broke trust like that.

**L—Mystery Man:** [Picture — Mystery Man is lying on his bed in nothing but tight black boxers, only the lower half of his body visible. He’s gripping his erection through the fabric to accentuate it. You can see where precome has leaked and darkened the fabric]

*Oh my god! We’re actually doing this!*

It’s a bit surreal knowing that somewhere in the neighbourhood another man is lying in bed, hard and horny, because of him. Thinking about him and imagining them being together. Sam could walk over there, crawl on top of the man and mouth at that cock if he wanted. Suckle at it through the tight fabric until L went mad with frustration, yanked down the boxers and forced Sam to swallow him down, holding him by the hair. In theory at least. He wonders if L is a top or bottom. *Please, let him be a top.* Just because Sam is big and tall, guys assumed he was a top by default, when in reality he’d rather bottom 75% of the time.
Sam: That’s some substantial girth you’ve got there. Nice. What would you want me to do to you if I was there?

L- Mystery Man: It’s more of what I want to do to you, Sammy. And I want you to let me do it.

L- Mystery Man: I want you to WANT me to do it.

L- Mystery Man: But I’m a realist. I’ll settle for you pretending to want me.

Sam: I’m not pretending. Tell me what you’d do to me if I was there.

L- Mystery Man: I’d push you up against the wall and tug that towel off. You would look all indignant about it, since you’re proud. I’d grab your wrists to hold them over your head and grind myself against you. You’d struggle against my grip, but not too hard because you don’t want me to stop, not really.

L- Mystery Man: And you know I’d stop the moment you say "No" or "stop", don’t you Sammy?

Sam didn’t know that and even if they’re only sexting it’s reassuring somehow. For a brief moment Lucifer pops up in his head—how fast he’d yanked his hand away upon hearing “Don’t touch me.”

I’m not making that mistake again.

He closes his eyes and pictures it. Envisions being pinned to the wall, glaring in defiance at the man that grinds his clothed dick against Sam’s naked one while meeting his gaze with a hungry leer. Both of their bodies tense in a silent power struggle. Sam speeds up his hand movement over his dick with a groan, precome slicking up his grip.

It’s a bit ironic, how hard he’s fought against the rape culture they live in, how many articles he’s written about the importance of verbal consent, when he found the idea of being taken such a turn on. Not actual rape of course. But the game of dubious consent, of being dominated, when you said one thing with your mouth and another with your body. Your partner had to be adept enough at reading body language to discern between when no meant “no” and when no meant “fuck yeah, just like that”. He’s ashamed of being turned on by it. It feels like a betrayal to those he’s represented in sexual assault or rape cases. But they aren’t here and nobody has to know that he likes the primal element of being conquered. He has to convey this to mystery man though. That he likes this fantasy and is in on it. He’s a bit embarrassed about sexting with somebody. He’s never done so before. But the thrill overshadows the embarrassment.

Sam: I’m not telling you to stop. This game turns me on. I’m hard. I want you bad but I don’t want you to know how badly I want you. You kiss me and I respond by kissing you back even if I struggle against your grip.

L- Mystery Man: This isn’t going to cut it. I’d hoist you up around my waist, still kissing you, and carry you to the bedroom.

Sam: That might not be so simple. I’m 6’4 and weigh 225 pounds...

L- Mystery Man: Work with me, Sammy. I’m a strong man. I’m 6’1 and weigh 204, most of which are muscles. Add that to how aggressively
I covet you and I could lift and carry you far greater distances without breaking sweat. It all depends on how much you struggle and if I have to subdue you to do it. But I don’t, now do I? You’d be showing your defiance by biting at my tongue and lips until I threw you on the bed where you'd back up against the headboard.

**L- Mystery Man:** I can picture it. You’d be looking at me, eyes burning angrily, lips a thin line and chest heaving. Supporting yourself on your elbows, legs loosely sprawled to let me in. You’re far too beautiful for me, far out of my league. I'd give you a superior smirk to hide how much you really intimidate me.

**Sam:** You know it's an act, right? I'm quivering in anticipation and trying to hide it.

**L- Mystery Man:** No. I don’t know that. I'm not going to question it right now though. I'm going to take advantage of you until you say stop. Your apparent defiance excites me, lends me confidence.

**L- Mystery Man:** I'd remove my underwear, grab lube from the bedside table and climb up on the bed below you. If you kick I'll defend myself and hold you down by force. You got to use words to stop me. You want me to do something, use words, otherwise I'll just take. That's the rules we're playing by.

**Sam:** You think you could? Subdue me by force?

**L- Mystery Man:** I know I can. That is not false confidence. I've been doing martial arts all my life. I've never used my skills for this though. Do I need to start now?

Sam tries out different scenarios in his head, from full on resisting to taking the lead. But in the end it's still the idea of saying both yes and no at the same time that is the most arousing at the moment.

**Sam:** No. I'm submitting, just making a show of defiance. I'm not fighting you. I'm waiting for your next move. I want you to grab my hair and make me blow you. I want you to kiss me. I want you to fuck me like you own me. I'm ashamed of wanting it so bad. Afraid that if I open my mouth I'm going to humiliate myself by begging. That’s why I keep quiet and wait.

**L- Mystery Man:** Your pride is a beautiful thing. I'd push your legs aside and slot myself between them. Hold myself up above you and slowly lower myself down for a kiss. I bet you’d tense up but wouldn't withdraw. I bet you’d be hungry for it.

**Sam:** I am. I kiss you back like I'm drowning and you are air. I push at your chest with one hand and pull at your arm with the other.

**L- Mystery Man:** I'd grab the hand you're pushing with and press it down on the mattress. I'd nip and kiss and suck at every piece of skin available to me, growling if you try to stop me. I've fantasised about kissing you so many times, about your taste, your scent. No matter
how much you squirm I wouldn’t let this chance slip away.

Sam: I’m getting close, L. Fuck me. Don’t bother prepping me, just use lots of lube and push in really slow.

L- Mystery Man: Are you sure? That will hurt, Sam. Even if I go slow. No matter what this might have led you to believe the last thing I want is to hurt you.

Sam: Yeah I'm sure. I like the burn. Just go slow til you bottom out. Be still 'til I make a frustrated noise and start moving. Then fuck me hard and fast, like it's a reward and punishment all in one and all I can do is cling on. When you come, pull out and come all over me.

Sam: Shit. I'm gonna come.

L- Mystery Man: Show me.

Panting, Sam jerks off faster, he’s worked up a sweat, red in the face, eyes closed. He drops the phone, pulls on his ballsack and immerses himself in the fantasy of being taken so hard he forgets all about shame, pride, responsibilities, and control.

He jackknives as he comes with a gutted sound, painting thick long white stripes over his stomach and chest. Some even landing on his chin and lips. Afterwards he lays panting, tired and sated. In the immediate bliss right after he takes a picture capturing the lower half of his flushed face, his ruddy chest, and stomach, still covered with come, and hits send. Drowsily he thinks that was a stupid thing to do, but he’s too content to care just yet. Instead he sends another text right after.

Sam: Show ME. I wanna see you come.

L- Mystery Man: For the love of--! You ARE trying to kill me!

L- Mystery Man: [video attached. It's shaky and held from the side of the bed, showing L from chest to mid thigh, naked. He jerks himself off with his free hand, uncut cock red and glistening, hips rolling up in a slower rhythm than his frantic hand movement. Suddenly he cries out and arches off the bed, come shooting up and landing on his stomach. He shudders a couple of times as he comes, cock pumping. Then he relaxes and all you see is his chest and stomach heaving as he pants.]

Holy shit!

Sam had meant a pic, like he himself had sent but this is so much better. It’s almost enough to make him ready for a round two. It would have been when he was younger and had a shorter recuperation time. He watches three times in a row before he gets a series of texts.

L- Mystery Man: Don’t make me regret sending that. That's for your eyes alone.

L- Mystery Man: I'm chuckling now. Told you I am the teenager in this and you’re the one who got the live show. But how could I resist those dimples?

L- Mystery Man: You simply blew my sense away by telling me to come on you, then following up with a picture of you with come all over.
I'm convinced I died a little when I saw that.

**L- Mystery Man:** Would you be adverse if I'd lick it off your chin and push it into your mouth with a kiss? (How did you manage to get come on your chin anyway?)

**Sam:** Averse to it? On the contrary. ;) That video was hot! Thank you. I don’t know about you, but I could probably fall asleep now.

**Sam:** I fold in on myself when I come. I think I actually got a little on my forehead as well. ^^'

**L- Mystery Man:** Personally I could go for a snack, but if you’d fallen asleep beside me I’d stay put in bed and trail my fingers reverently over your skin, marvelling at my luck. I don’t get what you’d want with me. You’re too good. Too pure. What do you want from me?

**L- Mystery Man:** Do you always fold in on yourself when you come?

**Sam:** What I want? How about your eternal love and devotion? ;)
And yeah, I guess.

**L- Mystery Man:** That’s all?

**Sam:** LOL!! "That’s all?" XD That’s kinda a lot, L.

**L- Mystery Man:** Well, love and devotion comes by itself with no effort from my side. As for eternal, I can’t make such a promise. Nobody can. Just flash me those dimples now and then and you’ll have me dancing to your tune like a mindless Hamelin rat.

**Sam:** Dude. The Hamelin rats die.

**L- Mystery Man:** Don’t I know it.

Sam chuckles and shakes his head.

**Sam:** I'm not lying about being drowsy though. I'm gonna try to make the most of this and get some shut eye.

**L- Mystery Man:** Glad I could be of service. Go on. Beat the insomnia.
Sweet dreams, Samwise.

**Sam:** Thanks. You too. Goodnight. xoxo

He feels a bit ridiculous about adding the x’s and o’s. But seriously. How do you end a text conversation with a stranger you just kinda had sex with? He’s happy and sated though and it doesn’t take long to fall asleep. He sleeps the whole night through, and if he dreams of Lucifer he doesn’t remember it in the morning.

**Friday**

The next morning when Sam is having breakfast he’s feeling a bit uneasy when he thinks about yesterday, but not for the obvious reasons. Not for sexting or sending pictures of himself to a stranger. He should be freaking out both over what he wrote and what he did, but he isn’t. It’s something in the back of his mind that’s been bugging him, that he hasn’t reacted to until now,
excusing it as jokes. He scrolls up and reads their full conversation last evening. “But I’m a realist. I’ll settle for you pretending to want me.” He scrolls further back, to when he asked about wanting someone you can’t have and he answered “A bitch in college and now you, Samwise.” And that’s not all, over and over there are not so subtle hints that mystery man simply doesn't believe Sam’s interest to be real, which should be real fucking disconcerting considering the fantasy that got the two of them off yesterday. (And to be honest, Sam will get off on it today too. He feels really fucking ashamed about being so turned on by it, but he is. At least nobody but him and L knows about it.)

He should be worried about what kind of person L is when he initiated a scenario when he took Sam without asking if he truly doesn’t think Sam wants him. That’d be like fantasising about real rape. Yet he repeatedly reminded Sam he could put a stop to things just saying “no”. This guy asked for consent just to be allowed to fantasise about Sam for christ sake! So Sam’s uneasiness isn’t derived from that, it’s about L himself who always seem so self-confident. And maybe he is, but this makes Sam think he has low self-esteem. Sam wonders why.

Chapter End Notes

THIS CHAPTER WAS HELL TO EDIT AND CODE!!! I'm NEVER writing a texting fic again!!! *lies, all lies*
(Okay so maybe I will, because I love reading texting fics so I'll end up writing them too. But seriously. Effing Hell to edit!)
Every Little Thing I Do

Chapter Summary

Glimpses of the same week as last chapter, but from another angle. :)

Chapter Notes

When I wrote this I was listening to the Discovery Weekly playlist on spotify and an old favourite song of mine popped up. I hadn't heard it for years but It goes well enough with the boys' state of mind that I had to name the chapter after it. :) Every Little Thing I Do - Soul for Real It's not necessary to listen to the song to enjoy the chapter. They don't have anything to do with each other. Nevertheless, the song will be included in the "soundtrack". ;)

Also - cameos. There's two of them. Just because I felt like it. ^^'

Every Little Thing I Do

Everyday Skirmishes

Monday morning

“Hey, Stiles. That contract you were fretting about? I think I’ve found a solution,” Sam says, poking his head into his colleague’s office.

..."Don’t touch me.” Lucifer’s hand jerking away as if burned...

Stiles—a man with perpetual teenage appearance—looks up in surprise. “You have? Come in, come in I, um...” Stiles runs both hands through his hair, making it stick up haphazardly—correction, more haphazardly—then starts shuffling through all the files and papers on his desk. “I have it here somewhere... um.”

Sam’s lips twitch in amusement as he makes his way inside and sits down in the chair opposite Stiles.

...The way Lucifer’s finger felt pressed against his lips. The mischievous glint in his eyes when he smirks...

Looking at Stiles one could wonder how on earth he survived law school. However, his scatterbrained, sometimes twitchy, mannerism is deceptive. He is not the most organised person by all means, but very, very smart. He had a great gut feeling about things, and boundless energy. Sam sometimes mused (enviously) that the guy must have been born with a caffeine gland that the rest of humanity lacked.
“Renegotiating the terms already, or purely habitually?”

“Aha! Here it is,” Stiles says with a satisfied smile, claps his hands, and rubs them together quickly, then opens the file. “Okay. Right. So this is the paragraph in the contract that has been bothering me.” He riffles to a certain page in the file, then pushes the file over to Sam, pointing at a paragraph in the contract that causes his client such grievances.

...Lucifer’s and his footsteps beating the dusty red ground in perfect unison as they jogged… Lucifer’s hurt-stricken look when he saw Sam amongst his antagonists at the site of the dam accident...

Sam had read through the contract after Stiles had complained about it on their coffee break last week. He didn’t actually need to see it again. “Look. I’ve been giving it some thought since our talk. And it seems like it’s impossible to work around. But get this…” Sam leans forward and starts explaining.

The firm Sam works for—Rainsborough Law—is owned by a married couple, Thomas and Grace. The firm’s unofficial motto is “It’s the Christian thing to do” and Sam thinks it sums up the owners’ general attitude perfectly. The two owners cater to a select clientele of rich and famous people who, in private, are dedicated in humanitarian and social issues, and who likes that most of the money they spend on their legal dealings, filter through the firm to make sure people who normally wouldn’t be able to afford a lawyer, still are able to get the help they need. The employees all take care of legal issues for people who can’t afford it. The pay is decent considering that most of the firm’s clients don’t bring in money. It’s very diverse work. From simple things as writing wills, looking over contracts, negotiating terms, setting up business deals or prenups (even poor people needed these things), to lawsuits, defense in a court of law and… well anything really. Due to the diverse nature of his job, Sam never really stopped studying, making reading up on unfamiliar fields part of his workday.

It’s Monday. He’s supposed to call Lucifer and decline the offer. He keeps putting it off. First by stopping by Stiles, then by reading up on boat related tax laws…

...The wintry scent of Lucifer hitting him when he was backed up against Lucifer’s car...

...then by tweeting some commentary on today’s headline news and reading tweets responding to his previous tweets. He knows he should stop procrastinating and just make the call. It has to be done before lunch. After lunch he’s booked in a shit ton of mundane meetings and tasks, so that he won’t have to do any heavy duty thinking, expecting to feel drained already.

...Lucifer yanking the woman out of traffic… Lucifer covered in mud helping by the dam accident… Lucifer’s incredibly clever defense of Sucrocorp… The contrast between Lucifer’s business persona and the scruffy man he is off duty… Lucifer calling him by names of fabled beauties of mythology… Lucifer maybe-not-joking about wanting to sleep with him… Lucifer possibly trying to ask him out for a lunch date...

His finger had hovered over the call button like a million times by now, heart thumping and palms getting sweaty every time. He’s so torn. Partly because it feels like such a betrayal towards Jo, to be having these thoughts and feelings for the notorious man. Partly because it feels like when he makes this call his chance will be gone. He’ll be saying ‘no’ to more than just the offer to Jo. It’s for the best really. Probably. So why does it feel so hard?

There’s a knock on his door. All the employees have offices of their own, a luxury, in Sam’s mind. Usually his door stood open, inviting anyone in, but not today. Not with the Lucifer call looming. “Come in,” Sam bids. The door opens to reveal Mr. Thomas Rainsborough himself. A
handsome man nearing his fifties, who reminds Sam of Michael Fassbender. He’s not around the office much. His clients may have their addresses here in Cali, but as often as not were out of state. He went where they went.

“Hey, Sam. Got a minute?” Mr. Rainsborough asks. He’s holding two cups of coffee, one in each hand.

“Mr. Rainsborough. Yes, of course! Come in.” Sam gets up from his chair and gestures for his boss to take seat, while he goes around his desk to sit in one of the two visitors’ chairs. He’s got great respect for the older man, and it would never occur to him not to offer him the seat that indicated higher rank.

Thomas doesn’t take that seat though, he sits down in the other visitor’s chair and places a cup in front of Sam on the desk. He turns his chair so he’s halfway facing Sam, making Sam do the same. “Extra strong and one creamer, that’s how you like it, is it not?” he asks and indicates the coffee. For someone so rarely at the office he sure noticed a lot of things.

“Yes, Sir. But this is not my cup,” Sam says. They all had their own cups in the break room (and a blessed, fancy coffee machine). Sam had an old chipped one—it’s pink, with the word ‘Hers’ printed on it. Dean had given it to him back in the days when they were still living in the Impala. Dean still had its blue counterpart with the ‘His’ print. Dean used to call him Samantha any time he saw Sam drink out of it. (Which, to be honest, influenced his decision to take the cup to work.) Dean used to buy the dual toothbrush packs too, that came in blue and pink or green and purple. Sam still retains that habit, always using the pink and purple one and leaving the blue and green ones for the overnight guests he rarely had.

“It is now. I bought it for you,” Thomas says with a little smile. It’s an odd thing for a boss to do but before Sam can ask about it Thomas goes on. “We just got the call that the Henderson trial has been moved to Thursday this week. You think you’ll be ready for it in time?”

Sam’s lips twitch in self-assured amusement. “Sir, I’ve been ready for it for weeks. Looking forward to it even. The Hendersons will get the compensation they deserve.” He takes a sip from the coffee and keeps the cup in his hand afterwards.

“You’re expecting to win?”

Sam nods.

Rainsborough chuckles. "Well, Sam. From most people that statement would sound conceited, but coming from you I'll believe it. Which leads me to why I'm here. You're aware that there's going to be media coverage of this trial, right?"

“Yes, Sir.”

“Should you win, it's very likely that you'll draw the attention of other, more well paying firms. I know your greatest concern is to be able to choose what clients and cases you take on, but your skill will garner offers we can’t really match, once the world gets their eyes on you. However, I would like for you to give us a chance, in case you're tempted by another firm. We’d hate to lose you.” Rainsborough leans back in his chair, drinks from his cup and looks at Sam over the rim.

“I’d say you’ve got nothing to worry about, Sir. I left a more well paying firm to work for you. I’m not in it for the money. I practise law to help people and I really like it here.” He does. It’s perfect for him. Applications for help that came in to the firm, checked to see if the information given about income wasn't fraudulent. After that the employees got to choose what clients they wanted. In cases like to Hendersons’, where the clients stood to gain good money if they won, the
firm took a percentage of the gain (but didn't charge a cent if they lost).

Rainsborough hides a smile by taking a sip from his coffee. “And we appreciate that attitude, Sam. But everyone has to live. I've noticed you take on double the workload compared to the others, and you take time helping your colleagues. Your success rate is almost 100%.” ‘Almost’ is the key word that gets to Sam. It isn’t good enough. People trust him to help them and any loss in court hits him hard. “You haven’t requested any overtime compensation. Yet, with your productivity rate I surmise you work a lot after hours?”

“A little bit, yeah,” Sam admits reluctantly. It’s more than a little bit, but he doesn’t mind. (How else is he supposed to pass time?) He’s starting to get a bit anxious about where this conversation is going, but it doesn’t affect his body language.

“Don’t get me wrong now. We truly appreciate the work you put in. But I would recommend you to take a breather once in awhile. Even if you only took the same workload as the rest, you’d still have the best statistics amongst our employees. The roof in how many paid overtime hours our employees are allowed is there for a reason that isn’t purely economical. Since you work anyway, I want you to know, that if you should choose to take a couple of days off, we will not dock your pay.”

“Thank you, Sir. But I love my work. I don’t have any reason to take a couple of days off,” Sam says with a lopsided smile. For some reason Rainsborough looks troubled by the answer, rather than pleased. Sam sips the coffee. He loves his work and is proud of his results. He finds this conversation confusing. Is he being reprimanded or complimented?

“Mh. Very well. I have to get going. I’m off to Vancouver in a couple of hours,” his boss says and gets up. “I just want you to know that I see, and value, all of my employees. I’m not supposed to play favourites, so… let’s just say I don’t want to lose you, Winchester. If there’s anything you need, don’t hesitate to ask,” he says with a warm smile and holds his hand out for a handshake.

Sam puts his cup down on the desk, gets up and shakes his hand, returning the smile. “Thank you, Sir. I will.”

“Good. Have a nice day.”

“You too, Sir.”

At the door Thomas stops and looks back at him. “Winchester? Take care of yourself, alright?”

“Um. Of course.”

Rainsborough nods, leaves his office and closes the door behind himself. Sam’s left staring at it in confusion for a beat before he gives himself a shake and goes around the desk to sit in his place again. He reaches for his coffee cup and sees it has a print. “You can’t pour from an empty cup.” He takes a sip, puts the cup back down and turns the it around with no conscious thought, hiding the print.

That was strange… I wonder what he really wanted?

Whatever it was, Sam’s grateful for the interruption. Now he’s back to fretting about the call to Lucifer.

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**Thursday Afternoon**
Luci’s at the courthouse. He’s just on his way out when he spots Sam exit his car. Sam walks around the car and opens the backseat door to let an old couple out. It strikes Luci that Sam might be here for a trial, and the thought of getting to see Sam in action has his heart fluttering in excitement. He melts into the shadows behind a pillar and watches as Sam escorts the couple up the wide stone stairs, slightly bent down to talk reassuringly to them. Once they’re inside Luci follows, his stupid stomach flip flopping at getting to see Sam again. He shoots off a text to Bela telling her to delegate his two client meetings for the afternoon, then slinks into the courtroom Sam entered, following behind someone else and hoping not to be noticed. He sits in the back. The trial has drawn a fairly large number of spectators, and even some press.

The answer as to why comes when the judge announces “The Hendersons versus Mirkland Spotlight Productions”. Mirkland is a production company responsible for a whole lot of reality shows, and other crappy TV. Apparently Mirkland had borrowed the Hendersons’ house to make an episode of the semi-popular show ‘Ghostfacers’, then, for dramatic effect, set the house on fire, leaving the Hendersons homeless. Now the Hendersons are suing for compensation. But, and it’s a big ‘but’, they had signed a contract when they granted the company use of their home for a week. This contract had a cleverly written paragraph that rendered Mirkland free from responsibility for any damage to the house that happened during production, however it happened. The same paragraph had made the Hendersons’ insurance company refuse to pay them any insurance.

The paragraph was so cleverly written that a layman, or even a sloppy/stressed lawyer, might miss its meaning in a read through. (Luci applauds the writer of the contract.) Basically, the Hendersons had themselves to blame. Such is the law. It’s not about right or wrong, or what’s just and fair. It’s a set of rules. The rest is just how well you could bend and twist these rules without breaking them. That’s all.

Turns out, Sam not only can bend them, but crochet bloody tapestries out of them. From the moment he stands up and begins to speak he turns into a completely other man than Luci had interacted with this far. He’s confident, sharp tongued and sharp witted, knows how to charm the jury and to goad the opposition to speak out of term. He brings up dusty old precedents, and knows when to object or keep his silence. He shines so brightly Luci feels weak at the knees. Sam reminds Luci of, well, himself, but in the beginning of his career. The train of lawyers Mirkland brought doesn’t stand a chance, whereas it should have been the other way around. Luci imagines himself conducting the Mirkland defense, making a game of coming up with counters to Sam’s moves. Repeatedly he gets annoyed at Mirkland’s side for missing good precedents and law paragraphs to counter Sam’s. It’s hard to believe that Sam would believe he doesn’t stand a chance against Luci. Oh, Luci’s still sure he’ll win, but not without a good fight.

Luci’s quick to slink out as soon as the ruling is declared (in Hendersons’ favour), not wanting to be spotted. He’s aroused—not in the sexual way—but excited, inspired. Had he not had a romantic interest in Sam, and had Sam’s client not been someone close to him, Luci would have been looking forward to Jo’s trial with delightful glee. Plus, he would have tried to headhunt Sam afterwards.

He’s in his car on his way to his office when his phone chirps with a Twitter notification. MooseOnTheLoose hasn’t been quite as active as he used to, but nowadays Luci had a way of dealing with the annoying antler boy so he wasn’t as ticked off by the tweets anymore. Nevertheless, at a red light he stops and reads the tweet.

“What brings light must endure to burn.”

Luci stares at the quote, overcome by a nostalgic memory of sitting in his brother’s lap when he was seven and Michael fifteen.
Luci sniveled miserably and burrowed his head deeper against Mikey’s safe chest, feeling strong arm wrap tighter around him. It hurt a bit because of the bruises, but he never felt safer than he did when Mikey was around. Mikey gave him a kiss on the crown of his head, then rested his chin against it and rocked Luci gently while he cried. “Why are they so mean, Mikey? I’ve never done anything to any of them.”

He’d been cornered by five boys on the school yard, calling him “Satan”, pushing him around. Luci fought back, but even if he was a good fighter for his age—both by necessity and training (his father had made both his boys take martial art since they were four, in preparation of the soldier career chosen for them)—he couldn’t fend off five opponents that were bigger and stronger than him.

“I don’t know, little Star. Maybe they can’t handle how brilliantly you shine?” Mikey joked. “Remember, as Anton Wildgans wrote, ‘What is to give light must endure burning.’”

Luci snaps out of the bittersweet memory of his brother, tampering down the painful longing to have his brother back. He puts the phone back in its holder on the dashboard. Somehow, as personal as the quote is to him, apart from remembering the first time he heard it, it makes him think of Sam and the trial he just saw. Sam shone so brightly, he was so passionate and full of compassion. He did so many great things for people, just kept giving, and giving. And yet, thinking back on their text conversation this Tuesday when Sam told him about his exes, and adding what he knew about Sam being kicked out by their father in his teens… Plus Gabe had called him “nicest puppy in the pond”. Sam was definitely burning. Lucifer thinks about this on his drive back to the office. Once there he starts his computer and opens up Facebook and Tumblr.
The Impromptu Lunchdate

Chapter Summary

Sam is at Gabe's coffee shop working when Lucifer suddenly shows up and things become a lot more interesting...

Chapter Notes

As per usual, a huge thank you to MiZZ_Kitty21 who helps me point out when I write Swedish expressions in English and make no sense. ;)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Impromptu Lunchdate

Conquer and Divide

Sam’s sitting at a corner table at Gabe’s, drinking a coffee and working on his laptop when Gabe suddenly jumps over the counter with a cheery "Luci boy!". Sam looks up just in time to see Gabe hugging Lucifer. His heart speeds up nervously as he tries to process what's happening. Surprise flickers over Lucifer’s face for a beat before he smiles and hugs back. The smile is close lipped but warm. Sam doesn’t like the burst of jealousy in his chest. "Good seeing you again, hotshot. Kali says hello and don’t be a stranger. She doesn’t want to wait as many years until next time she gets to see yo ugly mug,” Gabe says with a couple of back pats and steps away grinning.

"With her cooking skills? No risk. In fact, tell her to call me when she becomes single and I’ll make sure she’ll be seeing as much as she wants of me,” Lucifer says with a teasing smirk.

Gabe laughs, not at all offended, and leans in to stage whisper “Shhh. Not so loud, your boyfriend might hear you,” and points a thumb at Sam in the back. Sam’s cheeks heat up (Christ! Even Gabe knows about his crush. Dean’s a dead man!) as Lucifer looks the way Gabe indicated and meets Sam’s eyes. Yet another flicker of surprise and then Lucifer saunters his way with a pleasant expression on his face.

Oh god! What do I do? Shit, shit, shit!

It’s absurd. How the hell are you supposed to talk with somebody, when you spend almost every night dreaming about them, about being fucked by them, kiss them stupid, or having fully fledged arguments with them? And during daytime, it's all thoughts of him or mystery man. Of course, right now any thoughts of mystery man are gone. He wishes he could look just as suave and confident as Lucifer. And he looks perfect in his tailored suit and hair just slightly ruffled, like he’s run his hand through it a couple of times. Sam can’t even remember what his first impression of the guy was. Now his heart just stutters erratically at the sight of him. He swallows dryly as Lucifer comes to a stop by his table and curves his lips in a tiny smile. “Sam. What a pleasant
surprise. I wasn’t expecting to see you here. Mind if I join you?” He gestures at the chair beside Sam’s.

Somehow Sam manages to tilt his head to the side and pull the corner of his lip up in a lopsided smirk that looks a hundred times more confident and challenging than the turmoil on his inside should have allowed for. He shrugs and leans back in his chair. “It’s a free country,” he says offhandedly like he doesn’t care.

“How could so ice blue eyes look so full of warm mischief anyway? Sam kinda wants to punch the guy for making him feel so much. Mostly because he can’t really act on his attraction even if it’s true that it’s reciprocated. Well. He can. But it’d end with Jo’s trial. There’s no way he could start something up with the ‘enemy’ and then continuing it after Jo’s life went to shit. The dream of Jo being hauled away in cuffs, yelling accusations at him, is still fresh in his mind.

“You disagree that this is a free country?”

“Yes. But as long as you believe it is, I'm going to take full advantage. Let me treat you to lunch.”

Lucifer turns his head away and calls out to Gabe. "Hey, Gabe. Make me anything you deign to give me for lunch and whatever Sammy favours to eat."

"Coming right up, Luci boy," Gabe calls back.

Now Sam has a number of questions lined up that he’s dying to ask. He's not sure where to start. "Look. If you're planning to try to convince me to take the offer, I've told you, it's not my call to make."

"I disagree, but nevertheless…” Lucifer sits down beside him without taking his eyes off him. "I am. I do. But people say a lot of things they don't mean. I say a lot of things I don't mean.” Sam shifts his leg a little bit closer so the warmth of Lucifer’s leg starts bleeding through.

Lucifer's gaze goes calculating, a close lipped smile slowly spreading on his face, making butterflies explode in Sam's stomach. "Do you now?" Lucifer asks with an eyebrow arched.

"Yes. In the heat of the moment I have said things I've regretted," Sam answers and feels Lucifer’s leg press even closer in response. Sam makes a mental fistpump. "Besides, I just caught you in a lie," Sam smirks. "As I remember it, you were on your break the first time you offered to buy me lunch and discuss the case."

"Touché." Lucifer twists his body and puts an arm on the backrest of Sam’s chair. "It was a rare and rather selfish offer hidden as a favour. I confess, I was more than a little curious about the Adonis slash coffee boy slash vandalist slash lawyer in the elevator with me. I wanted to know more about you. I'm yet to figure out why you hate me. Is it personal or just general loathing towards Lucifer?” Lucifer’s smile is lascivious and his eyes are sharp and playful.

"He is flirting with me, right? Dean’s right! He totally is!"

Sam’s cheeks feel like they’re on fire. "Hate is hardly the problem here, Lucifer,” he shoots back. How the hell he manages to keep his smile cocky and his gaze steady and challenging while his
cheeks are burning and his inside is a fluttering mess, he'll never understand.

Lucifer raises his eyebrows in question, lips twitching in amusement. His cheeks are getting a pinker tint. Nothing near Sam's own bright flush, but he's definitely blushing.

When did this happen? When did they just skip over a shitload of crap and went right into this? Lucifer acts with a lot more familiarity than their previous encounters warrants. If Dean hadn't been so sure about Lucifer liking him he'd probably misread some of this, thinking he was seeing stuff just because he wanted to see it. But no. There’s no way he's wrong about the way Lucifer’s eyes trail over his face, catches on his lips and meets his eyes again means anything but what he wants it to mean.

"Guys! Please! Do I have to bring out condom goggles for you?" Gabe calls out to them.

Sam jerks his head away and turns towards his laptop again, reaching out to start typing.

Lucifer scoffs and twists his head towards Gabe. "If we can't use our eyes for this it's going to be really hard to keep your establishment PG rated."

Sam barely suppresses a nervous giggle. Yeah. He's definitely not misinterpreting what's going on.

"You'll have to wait until after closing time if you want to bump the rating, Luci," Gabe calls back and waggles his eyebrows at them suggestively.

"Luci?" Sam asks curiously, drawing Lucifer's attention back to him.

"Yes. It's a nickname. My brother used to call me that. And my bullies, although that particular taunt misfired as I like the name. So now my friends use it," he explains with an amused quirk to his lips, while he scrutinises Sam's reaction.

"I've got a cat named Lucy," Sam says and instantly flinches when he hears himself. Who knew it would be so easy to get used to the new name anyway?

Lucifer looks surprised and even more amused. "Do you now?"

"No. Yes. I mean. My ex named her Mimi when we got her. But she’s recently been renamed. Why were you bullied?" he asks to change the subject.

Lucifer frowns in annoyance. "You of all people shouldn't need to ask me that, jackass. You've given me a fair share of unjust crap, based on my name alone. I'd like to think you'd be smart enough to understand that you're not the only one."

Sam's face falls and his guts twist in guilt. He's about to apologise but Lucifer stops him. "Oh, don't give me that look. Just keep flashing those dimples at me and I'll keep forgiving you."

Lucifer reaches out and strokes hair out of Sam's face, eliciting a shudder and goosebumps with the brief touch. Sam wants to follow the hand as it withdraws. "Besides, it was not the only reason. I was rebellious and still breezed through school. They hated me for it and said I was cheating. Apparently, people are of the opinion that you have to choose between being an intelligent A student and a stuck up little bitchass punk. I was both. I wasn't cheating by the way. Unless you count reading and working hard in school cheating." He smirks and looks immensely satisfied when Sam chuckles. "Plus, I wasn't averse to tell people to go fuck themselves. It amounts to me being unapproachable for friendly overtures. Or so I've been told."

"Maybe if you hadn't been so full of yourself, people would have been nicer? You’re more than a little arrogant." Sam challenges, remembering how conceited Lucifer had been about Sam not
being able to win against him in court.

"Victim blaming. Good one, Sammy. Sure. If I had let people walk all over me, if I had held back my abilities so I didn't get straight A's, let them beat me up during recess, then I'm sure that they'd be more happy to have me around." The arm on Sam's backrest suddenly comes to land around his shoulder and he's pulled towards Lucifer until they're face to face and everything is just Lucifer’s scent and presence. Sam has put a hand on Lucifer’s thigh to steady himself in the sudden movement. Now his heart is racing and he is intensely aware of every point of contact—from their legs pressed together to the arm hooking him and how he can feel Lucifer’s breath hit his throat.

Lucifer lifts his free hand and cards through Sam’s hair in slow movements, and tilts his head back and to the side with a smirk. Sam wants to close his eyes and groan in pleasure. He doesn’t of course. This is too much of a what-a-fuck?-moment. Instead he's tense and caught up in the blue of Lucifer’s eyes. There’s an internal struggle going on. The fact that he's very pleased with what Lucifer is doing and wants more of it wars with the fact that nobody should just grab someone and start touching them like they had the right to without explicit consent. Even if said person really wants to be touched.

"Tell me Sam, what should I have done differently? When parents didn't want their children to play with the devil at fucking daycare? When I was told that George Orwell was unsuitable reading for a first grader just because my peers were still struggling to form the letters of the alphabet?" Lucifer snorts. "You know, that teacher actually thought the Animal Farm to be about what animals could be found on a farm, and suggested a book with pictures instead."

In spite of himself, Sam laughs and Lucifer’s eyes seems to glow in response, smirk turning into a smile. “So when kids tripped me, or shoved me, justifying it by me being Satan, do you think I was wrong not to fight back?" he continues. “Should I have been nicer? Would that have solved the problem of standing out? Should I have obliterated my own needs, wants, interests, and talents, to conform to what society demands to be comfortable around me?" He doesn’t give Sam a chance to respond just yet. “I didn’t. I took the advice of an Italian writer instead—It is better to be feared than loved, if you cannot be both.”

“Machiavelli isn’t exactly the best guidance counselor.” Sam wonders why he's letting Lucifer do this. Just sit there and hold him close, carding through his hair gently and intimately, like they knew each other and were dating. The fact is though, that Sam hasn’t removed his hand from his thigh either, and he sure as hell isn’t going to. His heart is racing and he’s more aware of the physical aspects of this conversation than what’s actually said. Oh, he hears it, and is distantly horrified at getting to know what Lucifer has suffered through. But all the butterflies, want, and nights of dreams about the man, overrides his higher brain function as per usual in Lucifer’s presence.

Lucifer sniggers. “He has a lot of good points. I’ll lend you my copy of The Prince and you’ll see in my notes what I mean. But to get back on topic,” his hand wanders down to stroke Sam’s cheek bone, making his breath hitch. “I don’t think you disagree with my refusal to conform, Sam. Not if you actually mean at least a tenth of those articles you wrote at Stanford.”

“You’ve read my articles?” Sam’s eyebrows shoot skywards in surprise.

“Every single one I could get my hands on. Including a couple of your earlier ones from different high schools.”

That elicits another kind of excitement in Sam. No matter what Lucifer thinks about them he’s just given Sam a huge, and very personal compliment. Which also hints at Lucifer being interested in him as a person, not just wanting to get in his pants. “What do you think about them?”
“I think they’re pure and noble in their intent. The anger you display is justified. I also think a lot of what you’re saying is naive, too utopian, and requires the obliteration of individual needs and wants. Moral absolutism is just as dangerous as the lack of morals. You know what I found a total lack of in every single one of those articles when I did a re-read the other day?”

Sam clenches his jaw and flares his nostrils angrily. “What?” he grits out and leans away slightly. Not enough to dislodge Lucifer, because all in all he doesn’t want to, but to mark his affront.

“You,” Lucifer says simply and taps Sam on the chin.

“How do you mean? I stand for every one of those opinions.” Sam frowns, but more out of puzzlement now.

“Oh, I’m sure you do. But where are your needs and wants in any of those? Where are you taking care of yourself, within this fight for social justice? I’m genuinely curious about that,” he says and tilts his head with a questioning troubled frown.

“I have it much better than the people I fight for. I’ve got my dream job, people who love and support me in everything I do, a house I love. I don’t need to think about myself.”

“So you’re happy?”

“Yes.”

Lucifer hums thoughtfully. “No trouble sleeping at night? No feeling of life just pressing down on you for no apparent reason? No exhaustion when you’ve rested well? No hounding guilt for thinking perfectly normal but bad thoughts about others, or wanting something that may be considered selfish? No shame for your desires? Hmm? No?”

Sam’s heart is racing now for a completely other reason than Lucifer’s proximity. Part of him wants to shove Lucifer away, get up and just run out of here. He shakes his head in denial. Too late he discovers that he’s clenched his hand around Lucifer’s thigh. Lucifer must have seen on his face what a gut punch it was because he looks sad—not mocking—just sad. “Look. I fight for those who can’t fight for themselves. I don’t know why you think that’s idiotic or whatever. I’m proud of what I do and it’s a lot better than to use my talents to free ruthless monsters like fucking Roman just for the sake of money,” Sam says defensively.

“I never said it was idiotic, Sam. If that’s what you heard you have to learn to listen more carefully.”

He looks like he is about to say more, but then Gabe shows up with their food. "Some sustenance for the lovebirds," he chirps. "So what are you talking about? I thought I’d have to close early because you wouldn’t be able to keep it PG, but then... Hells, I still think that. But you switched from oncoming lovemaking to angry sex a minute ago." He grins at them and Sam wonders what the hell Lucifer had said to him, for him to take in stride that they were sitting like this in the first place.

"We are talking about Sam’s dedication to social justice,” Lucifer offers amicably, at total ease with having his arm around Sam—rather proprietary if you scrutinised it—in front of Gabe.

"Ooo," Gabe coos delightedly. "Common grounds. Have you told him about Venus Rising? Sam’s gonna be really impressed by the foundation."

Now here’s where it gets interesting because Lucifer reacts as if Gabe just revealed that he had seven wives and the clap, the way they’re sitting Sam can actually see Lucifer’s pulse jumps on his
throat and colour flood his cheeks before the man completely withdraw, letting go of Sam to lean back in his chair and cross both arms and legs in front of him. He looks at Gabe in a sharp wtf-did-you-just-call-me?-way that suggests that taking cover right now would be a wise decision. Sam’s mind is working overtime and promptly reminds him of Sunshine Hill and the foundation Lucifer mentioned then. Dean had said 'something like Aphrodite Ascending’, the step wasn't far to Venus Rising. Venus—judging by Lucifer's reaction—as in the morning star. Basically, the Morningstar Foundation. Shit just got a whole new level of interesting.

"No I haven't. And will you keep it down? I have a reputation to uphold," Lucifer says curtly to Gabe. "How do you know about it anyway? Did Kali talk? She promised not to."

Gabe isn't perturbed. "Reputation-schmation, we're all friends here, Luci. You ain't fooling us. And no. I overheard you and Kali talk in the kitchen so I eavesdropped. I do that a lot. Anyway, enjoy your meal," he gives them a cheeky grin, a wink, and scuttles off. Sam thinks he maybe was a little spooked by Lucifer's vehement reaction after all.

"I should go," Lucifer declares, despite their lunch just having arrived. And Sam can’t have that. This obviously has the man in the same fight-response as Sam had a minute ago and Sam wants to know why.

Lucifer moves to get up but Sam's hand is still on his thigh so Sam squeezes it. "Stay," he says and Lucifer freezes mid motion to meet his gaze. So Sam goes for his best weapon and activities puppy eyes of Doom, while stroking Lucifer's thigh upward and inward slightly. "Luci, please..."

For a beat Sam thinks it's not going to work, but then Lucifer slowly sinks back in his seat again, eyes narrowed at Sam as if he knows that he’s being manipulated but allows it anyway, dancing to his tune like a rat of Hamelin. That particular simile doesn't sit well with Sam as it is something Mystery Man said and the thought of him makes Sam feel like he's cheating. He pushes the thought away for now and smiles gratefully when it's clear Lucifer isn't going anywhere. Lucifer scowls and turns his attention towards his food, muttering "For the love of —! Fucking dimples," under his breath. Sam doesn’t think he was supposed to hear that.

"You created the Venus Rising foundation," Sam states. "Why don't you want me to know?"

"What difference does it make, Sam?" Lucifer asks and starts eating his beef salad, not looking at Sam. "You instantly jumped to the conclusion that I would defend the disgusting excuses for human beings, who tried to burn workers to avoid paying wages. You’re not the only one. When people see me doing, or if I tell them I do humane things they assume one of two things, none of which is that I may be doing it out of empathy."

"What do they assume, Luci?" Sam asks softly, without taking his eyes of him longer than it takes to grab a fork with his free hand and dig into his own chicken salad. Gabe may specialize in sweets, but he is a great chef all around and his salads were one of the best foods Sam knew. He keeps stroking the inside of Lucifer’s thigh slowly, just moving his thumb back and forth.

Lucifer side eyes Sam. “Either that I’m weak, and ripe for an attack of one kind or another, or that I’m doing it for some hidden selfish reason. It’s most practical to keep it hidden, and if anyone connects the dots I simply claim the foundation to be for tax evasive reasons. Fear does half of my job for me. Did you know I stopped by to watch you at the Henderson trial last Thursday?” He looks up at Sam and quirks an eyebrow inquisitively.

“No. I didn’t know that,” Sam says, surprised. He had won that case, a parade victory. He’s really proud of the fact. Especially considering that his mind had been occupied by thoughts of both Lucifer and Mystery Man during most of the trial.
Lucifer’s lips quirk into that superior smirk that fucking does things to Sam. Lucifer relaxes again, it’s like his aura unfolds to just take up all the space around them, while it had drawn into a tight wall once Gabe brought up the foundation. “I did. It’s interesting. You believed me when I said you couldn’t win against me in court, and based on that alone you couldn’t. But I saw you Sam. You’d stand a good chance at winning if you didn’t buy into the story everybody has spun about me. A story I take great care to uphold for self-defensive reasons. And don’t get me wrong. One thing I share with my father, is that I stand for my word and honour my promises. It means that in court I will do my very best for my client, as I promised. No matter what my own wishes may be. You want to win against me it won’t be easy and it'll require a shitload of self confidence that currently, you don't have."

Sam is about to answer but Lucifer shakes his head and drops a hand to cover Sam's on his thigh, giving it a squeeze before removing it again, signalling that he isn't done. "A lot of things they say about me is true, Sam. I'm selfish. I see to the needs of myself and those I care about before I pay attention to the needs of strangers. I am ruthless in my pursuit of my goals. I don't lose sleep over collateral damage. I am rich. The inheritance from my mother, who died giving birth to me, was substantial and I keep adding to my wealth through work and good investments. My intelligence and education is above average. Materialistically speaking, I've never wanted for anything. I don't have a pleasant personality, I'm petty and vindictive by nature. I'm only letting you play me because you have something I want. But I won't lie to you and pretend that I'm something I'm not, to get it. That would be counterproductive."

"What do you want from me?"

"Everything. But I'm a realist. I know that's not on the table. So I settle for the occasional smile now and then." Lucifer smiles self-deprecatingly and winks at Sam. Something about that line tugs at the back of Sam’s mind, but is overshadowed by 'everything' and what that might entail. "Now, this topic makes me very uncomfortable so we'll put it to rest for now. Feel free to choose any other topic and I'll humour you." Lucifer waves a hand dismissively and pays attention to his food again.

Sam laughs incredulously at the finality with which the line is delivered and it draws Lucifer’s eyes to him, ice blue filled with warm wonder. Lucifer isn’t one to sport extreme facial expressions, but either he isn’t trying to hide, or Sam has just gotten so much better at interpreting him (possibly because Dean kept telling him Lucifer liked him and that’s why he could see it.) because the man did indeed convey a lot of emotions in his small gestures. ‘Just keep flashing those dimples at me and I'll keep forgiving you.’ He really meant that, didn’t he? And the line of letting Sam play him...

_Huh. I’m not the only one acting like a fool in this messed up attraction, am I?

This is the first time the realisation gets real for Sam. That Lucifer really is into him for reasons unknown. It’s thrilling, to say the least. And it gives Sam a major confidence boost. “Alright. How do you know Gabe?” he asks, letting go of Lucifer’s thigh to use both utensils while he eats.

If Lucifer is disappointed he doesn’t show it. “I stop by now and then because I like his coffee.”

“PFWAH!” Gabe yells out a protest from the counter and comes stomping to their table.

“What? It’s not a lie. Are you eavesdropping on everything we say?” Lucifer says with a vexed expression.

“No no. More like accidentally making sure I overhear. I’ve got a bet going. Don’t ask. And, Sam, don’t listen to him. He isn’t lying but he’s cutting out a huge part of the truth.”
“Oh yeah? And what’s that?” Sam grins bemusedly. The two of them certainly acts like it’s more than just customer-server relationship going on.

“We’ve been friends for years. When I bought this joint I got into contractual trouble—”

“Because you’re useless at reading stuff before you sign,” Lucifer remarks dryly.

“Whoever reads the terms and conditions anyways?”

“I do,” Sam and Lucifer answer as one and share a look and a snigger.

Gabe does a full body eye roll. “Course you lawboys do. I’m talking about real human beings. Anyway, Luci was one of my first customers. I’d only been open a couple of weeks when he says that I serve the best coffee in the state and I bitterly answer—”

“Enjoy it while it lasts,” Lucifer finishes for him with a fond smirk. “When I enquired about the statement he told me why he had to shut down.” He turns his head towards Sam. “Now, Sammy, you’ve been to college. You know the importance of good coffee. Naturally I couldn’t have this goldmine taken away from me.”

“—So he offered to ‘fix it’ for me for the price of free coffee and sweets for six months,” Gabe finishes for him with a grin. “Which he did. Plus he got my monthly expenses cut by half by some magic mumbo jumbo he calls ‘simple negotiation’.” Gabe repeatedly does air quotes and Sam can see Lucifer’s lips twitch in amusement every time.

“I’m a pragmatic man. It saves me time. I come in here, there’s no hassle with payment, they see me, they make what I want without me having to open my mouth. By the time I reach the counter, the coffee is already poured. Plus,” Lucifer tries to kick playfully at Gabe under the table, “this insolent teasing little shit grows on you,” he finishes as Gabe evades the kick with a laugh.

“Yeah. And now he’s handling my expansion for the same price even though I offered to pay now that business is blooming.”

“I don’t want your money, Gabe. It’s your talent I’m after. And your wife’s, come to think of it.”

“Any time, Luci boi. Kali enjoys your company as much as I do, just stop by whenever you feel like it.”

Sam looks back and forth between the two of them. It’s hard to believe Gabe has known Alighieri for years without Sam knowing. He would have asked to be introduced if he’d known. Obviously, if Gabe likes Lucifer, there’s much more to him than he tries to make people believe. He said as much himself, but Gabe doesn’t suck up to people just because they do him favours. He lacks tact enough for that. And the fondness that shows in their eyes as they smile at each other is clear.

“Will do. Now get us something decent to drink. This green mush you served with the food won’t do,” Lucifer says with a grin that seems half amusement and half annoyance. Which, to be fair, pretty much sums up the feelings Gabriel incites in people he knows well.

“Aye, aye, Cap,” Gabe answers and skips away.

“You should try the green mush, it’s good for you,” Sam says with a sunny smile.

“I’m eating a salad, Sam. Give me a break,” Lucifer protests but still takes a sip of the green concoction. He makes a face (that makes Sam laugh) and pushes the glass away from himself.

“No. I don’t want what’s good for me, I want what’s pleasing to me. This, is not. So how do you
know Gabe, Sam?”

Sam chuckles. “I came in here a couple of years ago, liked the owner, and kept stopping by to pine over him,” Sam confesses. “The crush went away eventually but I still liked him as a friend. Then my brother started dating his brother which makes him family now.”

Gabe comes back with two cups of his creative coffees and two freshly made juices. Thankfully there’s a line now so he hurries back without putting his nose into the conversation.

“The crush was reciprocated. Gabe calls you the one who got away. Why didn’t you act on it?”

“He did? It was? I… I honestly didn’t know. I mean, I suspected. But I’m. Look. I have had a lot of bad luck with my love life and it felt safer to just let it slip.”

Lucifer hums. “You shouldn’t do that. Some of us may find you worthy of the risk.”

“Us?” Sam asks with a lopsided smile. Lucifer only smirks knowingly, eyes sparkling. Sam feels his cheeks heat up again and he looks down with a shy smile, those butterflies going haywire again.

“Next question, Sam. What else do you want to know? Hmm?”

“What are your hobbies?”

“Beekeeping, gardening, woodworking, LARPing, reading, and getting annoyed at people declaring moronic opinions in public,” Lucifer deadpans.

“Woodworking?”

“Yes. I like to build things.”

“Like what?”

“You’ve seen one of my creations. My desk? In my office. Things like that. I’ve made most of the furniture I own.”

“Wow. That’s impressive.”

Lucifer shrugs disinterestedly but his cheeks colours slightly, belying the blasé attitude. Sam wants to ask about the rest of his hobbies too but Lucifer forestalls him. “How about you? What are your hobbies?”

“Um.. I don’t have many. Reading is a given. Working out. Oh, and declaring moronic opinions loudly in public,” Sam says going for cheeky.

Lucifer laughs, one of those startled carefree laughs that makes you feel like you’ve won the grand prize because you coaxed it out of someone. Sam practically beams at him, enchanted by the change in the man. Lucifer has layers of armour in his body language and he’d just dropped them all and it is glorious. If Sam could have this always he’d be a happy man. It wasn’t really that funny, was it? It must have been, the way Lucifer is smiling at him now, warm and affectionate and open, biting his lip. “Fair enough. Some of the things you’ve written I would call moronic. But I welcome a debate as to why, and I’m not too proud to change my mind if you can convince me. Just pick any topic…”

And that’s what happens. Sam brings up a political issue at random and the debate is on. Lucifer’s contributions are cynical, rather disdainful towards humanity, but also on point and practical. He
brings up solutions as to how one would go about to make the changes Sam wants, what it would take, not only to make them, but to keep them, and why it—despite being the seemingly humane thing to do—possibly shouldn’t be done. He also listens very closely to what Sam has to say, asking questions (in a similar manner Dean did to drag information out about Lucifer) to clarify exactly what Sam wants to achieve, how, and why. The thing is, he doesn’t listen the way most people do in a debate. Most people listen to hear how they can make a counterargument to win. Lucifer actually listens. He hears what Sam is saying and tries it out on his own worldview before saying his own bit. They flit from topic to topic and Sam realises that they share a lot of the same values, but Luci is looking at it from the most base perspective, counting on people’s lowest and most primal qualities as a ruling factor, while Sam has a firm belief in the inherent goodness in people. It is really fun and exciting to discuss with Luci and Sam finds himself thinking in new directions, finding solutions or beginnings thereof, on problems that has been bugging him. He is talking fast and animatedly. Luci is more restrained, but equally engaged. There were two issues where they could not get along, or even nearly so. The first one is the military. Sam is all for a strong defense and Luci is opposed to wasting money on the military.

“Yes, but look. My father was a marine—”

Luci scoffs. “I’m not diminishing the sacrifice the individual soldier, Sam. I’m sure he thought he did the right thing when he went off to Vietnam, Iran, Congo, the Gulf, Bosnia or wherever. I’m sure he was brave and loyal to his comrades in arms. I’m sure he thought he was protecting America by killing foreign people on foreign grounds. That’s not what I’m talking about. We’re wasting billions that could have gone to education and medical care here at home. And for what? How do we justify the lack of funding towards taking care of our own? We are murdering and oppressing people in other countries and draping ourselves in a hero’s cape as we do it. And this takes away focus from the oppression that goes on within our own borders. Towards Americans by Americans.”

“Yes but if you had a family member in the military you would understand—”

Yet again Luci interrupts Sam, this time with a bitter laugh. The look he pins Sam with a glare that is downright hostile and cold. “There you go making assumptions about me again, Sam. I thought we were past that point by now. Not a single man in my line of rather well documented ancestry have been a civilian except me. My father is a general and my brother flies fighter jets. So don’t tell me that I would understand. At sixteen I chose not to become a government sanctioned murderer, despite knowing that with this choice I would be disowned, and not allowed to speak with any family member ever again. I was fucking bred to be a soldier, Sam. You think this decision came lightly to me? That it is just some lofty notion of mine? I love my brother more than I care to think of, yet I haven’t spoken to him for twenty fucking years. You wish to continue this discussion right now, Sam? I prefer if we didn’t. In this particular subject you will not be able to change my mind anyway.”

The amount of pain Sam could see behind Luci’s cold and angry exterior made his heart clench. They dropped the subject. There were so many other things to talk about where they agreed or their disagreement was lighthearted. It didn’t take long for the mood to settle back into fun and exciting. The next time they ran into a topic they couldn’t agree about it was concerning civilians’ right to bear arms. Which Luci was against and Sam was all for. Sam is in the middle of making a very heated argument when Luci’s features suddenly smooths out to become soft and affectionate, and he laughs.

Sam’s mouth shut by pure affront and he scowls at Luci. “What?”

“There you are,” Luci says with a soft smile. “That was what I was talking about.”

Sam’s frown turns confused. “I’m not following.”
Luci reaches out a hand and strokes Sam’s cheek gently. Sam wants to both lean into the touch and fucking clock him in the face, feeling as he’s being insulted or belittled somehow. “This is what is lacking in every one of your articles. This is you. You have all these clever arguments, but in the end it boils down to that you really enjoy firing off a couple of rounds. Shooting is one of your hobbies too, right, Sammy?” Luci looks at him like he’s just uncovered a great treasure and Sam is a bit stupefied.

“I, I guess. But that’s not the point.”

Luci shakes his head. “It’s point enough for me. You want a gun, you should have it. I will not lay a finger between to make it harder for you to do something you enjoy.”

Sam feels a bemused smile tug at his lips. “That easy, huh? Despite all the figures you just brought up about unnecessary deaths and accidents caused by the easy access to guns?”

“That easy. I’m selfish enough to care more for the wishes of those I value personally than the safety of the masses.”

Sam snorts a sceptical laugh. “Oh yeah? And if I wanted to rape and murder of innocents, what then?” he asks disdainfully.

Lucifer smirks, raises his eyebrows meaningfully and taps his temple with a finger. “I wouldn’t value you personally if you did, so the question is moot.”

And that makes sense. They do share a lot of common values. As odd as it may be when Luci is self-centered without shame and Sam is selfless (with a lot of shame to boot). Sam laughs and then, smiling, gives Luci a fascinated look. “You’re really something else, you know that?”

“So I’ve been told.” Luci bites his lip, trying not to grin.

He’s adorable like this, Sam thinks and wonders what he’d do if Sam was to kiss him right now.

“Sam, not to spoil this episode of ‘Heart eyes and politics for dummies’, but don’t you have a meeting you needed to get to soon?” Gabe calls out and startles the two of them out of their little bubble.

Sam looks at his clock. They had finished eating a while ago, but the time still surprises him. They’ve been sitting together for more than two hours. Where the fuck did the time go? “Shit. I’m sorry. This was really nice, but I have a client meeting in 30 minutes and I need to get going,” Sam says regretfully.

“I’ll walk you to your car,” Luci declares.

They say goodbye to Gabe and leave. The short walk to Sam’s car is a bit tense. Mostly because, as easily as words had been flying a moment ago, now the moment of separation nears—the question of what will happen next is looming, making Sam nervous. He doesn’t know what to say. There’s so much he wants and he’s having trouble remembering why he shouldn’t. But the closer he gets to his car, the more he’s reminded that this is a bad idea and it shouldn’t happen. Nothing has changed. Luci is still the opposing counsel that will fuck shit up for Jo, and Jo’d never forgive him for thinking with his dick (okay so it’s more to it than that, it doesn’t matter).

“That was very a rewarding way to spend time. Thank you for the pleasure of your company,” Lucifer says when they’re at Sam’s car. “I was wondering if you want to do it again sometime? Over dinner perhaps? Or drinks?” Luci’s face is set in a neutrally amicable expression as he asks.

Sam smiles hesitantly. Inside, he’s soaring by being asked and despairing because of what he
needs to answer. “I. Um. I had a great time too, Luci.” He turns around and opens the car door enough to throw his laptop inside and closes it again. “But I can’t,” he says with his back still towards Luci. He doesn’t want him to see how badly he wants to say yes.

Suddenly Lucifer puts his hands on either side of him on the car and leans in close, almost pressing against him, but not quite. His lips brushes the soft skin on his neck just behind his ear when he talks, making Sam’s heart speed up, those fucking butterflies go berserk, and goosebumps to erupt. “They tell me that you’re as interested in me as I’m in you. The thought is bizarre to me. You’re too good and pure to want anything to do with me. But after today, I’m inclined to believe them. You certainly act the part.”

Sam gets out a noise that might have been a weak “Mhm” but might have been just a whimper, and closes his eyes.

“It irks me that you’re so disconnected from your greed and desires, Sam. It irks me, because there’s nothing I can offer to entice you with, to buy me some time, a couple of more moments with you, if you hold fast that you want for nothing.” Lucifer nuzzles his neck and inhales deeply, when he breathes out he drags teeth in a soft mock bite on Sam’s neck and every fucking nerve in Sam is on fire. He lets out an embarrassing sound, getting weak at the knees and sinking down a bit, pressing closer to Lucifer. “You’re so fond of quotes. I’ll give you my favourite Da Vinci quote that I try to live by. ‘It had long since come to my attention that people of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them. They went out and happened to things.’”

Luci kisses him gently on the neck and now Sam is panting, feeling lightheaded. He is getting hard embarrassingly fast. “But you, Sam. All you had to do to happen to me was stand outside a pet store and I was lost,” Luci continues. “I’ve wanted you ever since. I want happily ever after, but will settle for anything you deign to give me, however little that may be. You have no idea how much power over me I’m willing to give you in return.” Another scrape of teeth and another embarrassing noise from Sam. “Turn around,” Luci commands.

Dizzily, Sam obeys, leaning back against his car, legs spread wide to make himself shorter than Luci and at the same time offering perfect access to stand within the V, heedless of the tent in his pants. Lucifer’s cheeks are flushed, pupils blown wide, and his chest is heaving. He’s the mirror image of how Sam feels. He’s still boxing Sam in with his arms, looming, in this position. “Tell me to stop,” he tells Sam. Then he licks his lips and leans in for a kiss, stopping just for a fraction to look Sam in the eyes. Sam responds by licking his own lips in preparation and then Luci’s lips are pressed against his. His lips are soft and warm and Sam’s breath hitches. He feels like the swooning maid in a bodice ripper.

It’s a chaste kiss, for a couple of seconds. It escalates quickly from there. Weeks of pining, of held back want and lust, comes crashing in on them. Luci’s the one to deepen the kiss, to really taste Sam, but once they start Sam’s walls collapses and he kisses back like he’s drowning, starving, dying, and this is his only salvation. He grabs onto Luci and pulls him as close as physically possible, hands wandering and grabbing at Luci’s back like he can’t decide where he wants to touch, and thus tries touching everything at once. Luci kisses like tidal waves lapping at a beach, passionately, unforgiving, shamelessly. One of his hands has cupped the back of Sam’s head, burrowing into his hair, the other comes around to grip his ass to pull him closer still. He laps, sucks, bites, moves his lips against Sam’s in a way that is perfect and just mindblowing.

He’s as hard as Sam is.

Sam knows because he keeps rolling his hips against Luci’s for friction and Sam can’t separate who of them is making noises of pleasure.

Sam can’t remember when kissing felt this good. Jess maybe? But they were young and kissing
was as far as it went. Brady perhaps? But still no, because as passionate as their lovelife was, Sam never forgot about decency in public like he does now. He’s so lost in it, that if Luci told him to drop his pants and present he’d do so without second thought, letting Luci fuck him up against the car in the middle of a street in broad daylight, and damned be the consequences. Like it isn’t bad enough already. Two grown men in business suits making out and dry humping against a car like their lives depended on it, and Sam doesn’t care. He *doesn’t care*!

Sam’s phone rings.

It makes Luci still and break the kiss or Sam wouldn’t have acknowledged it. They’re both panting hard. Luci looks absolutely debauched, dazed, red in the face, lips red and spit slicked, eyes nearly black. Sam must look the same from how he’s feeling. He wants to scream in protest when Luci takes a step away and puts his hands back on the car on either side of Sam. Sam digs up the phone and looks at the caller ID. Guilt crashes in on him like a bucket of ice water. He answers. “Now’s not a good time, Jo. I’ll call you back,” and hangs up.

He can’t bring himself to look at Lucifer, just hangs his head. He’s weak and selfish for giving in. For taking this and forgetting his loyalty towards Jo. They’re standing still for minutes, possibly hours, while their breathing slowly turns back to normal. Sam can sense that Lucifer is scrutinising him, but he doesn’t dare to look up, lest his resolve would break again. “I’m sorry…” Sam says after an eternity has passed. “I can’t.”

In his peripheral vision he sees Luci nod slowly, then shake his head. Luci draws in a quick breath as if he’s about to say something, but no words come. Instead he pushes himself off the car, away from Sam. Sam closes his eyes, gut twisting and churning, a traitorous lump clogging his throat. He thinks Luci will walk straight away, instead he touches Sam. With slow movements that feel like they’re weighted by lead despite being nothing but soft touches, he straightens Sam’s clothes, fixes his tie, and restores him to decency. When he combs through Sam’s hair with his fingers Sam leans into the touch. This must be goodbye. He can’t have this and should never have thought he could steal just a moment to himself without it counting as betrayal. “I can’t,” he repeats. It comes out tiny and broken, barely audible. Lucifer rests his forehead against Sam’s for a moment. Then he draws a deep breath, gives Sam a soft kiss on the corner of his mouth, and walks away.

Chapter End Notes

Aaaand... we’ll soon be earning our depression-related tags. For obvious reasons. But with some semi-fluffy twists I suppose.... ^^'
Broken

Chapter Summary

The days following the lunch date, seen solely through snapshots of Sam's phone.

Chapter Notes

This is where we start earning all the depression related tags. So. I hope you've read the fic tags if you've got triggers. Even if this chapter is semi-fluffy.

Also, this fic pays homage to one of the most brilliant illustrations of what it's like to struggle with mental illness I've ever seen on TV. The whole Hallucifer arc has in such simple way demonstrated how it feels when your head turns against you. You try to ignore dark thoughts, tell them to go away, get mad at them, but they stick, can't be shook. Your mind can't shut down, it tortures you, it won't let you sleep. It drains you until there's nothing left. Hallucifer made that so tangible and I salute SPN for making it so easy to see, exactly how unseen illnesses like depression can look like.

Of course, in this fic, Lucifer doesn't play the role of the antagonist. ^^'

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Broken

Left in ruins

**L- Mystery Man:** I’m getting a bit worried. I haven’t seen Lucy for two days, nor have I heard a peep from you. Are you alright? Did something happen?

**Sam:** I cheated on you and betrayed a friend in the process. Lucy is fine. She’s been here, alternating between staring judgmentally at me and demanding cuddles.

**L- Mystery Man:** Sounds like her alright. Cheating, though? I wasn’t aware I had a claim on you to begin with. How could you have cheated?

**Sam:** It felt like cheating, so I guess you do. And I’m sorry. I honestly don’t feel like talking right now.

**L- Mystery Man:** Very well. Try to get some sleep and don’t forget to eat something once in awhile, even if it’s just a nibble on a cracker. I’ll leave you alone.

**Sam:** How did you know?
**L- Mystery Man:** You’re not the only one to ever bleed on the inside, Sammy. Take care of yourself.

**Sam:** Thanks. You too.

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**L- Mystery Man:** [Picture attached: The interior of a high class restaurant, a table for two, champagne on the table and a menu as the center focus of the picture]

**L- Mystery Man:** I’ve taken you on a date. Pick what you want to eat. The menu’s in French, do you need me to translate?

**Sam:** ???

**L- Mystery Man:** Come on, work with me, Sam. The scenario is this: My love interest has gone into total radio silence for four days, except for announcing that he has cheated on me (something virtually impossible as we aren’t officially dating). I’m afraid I’ll lose his interest totally if I leave him be so I’ve kidnapped him on a date, hoping to lure myself back into his graces.

**Sam:** lol! Wow. That’s the first time I’ve laughed for days. So you know French then?

**L- Mystery Man:** No, jackass. I’m just going to pretend by randomly describing courses, hoping you won’t discover the difference when you order tenderloin and they serve you duck paté.

**Sam:** Ha ha. XD If this is a date, then you’ll have to work on your terms of endearment. ;)

**L- Mystery Man:** Believe me, Samwise. When you ask questions like that, jackass and sweetheart will sound brutally similar coming from my mouth.

**Sam:** ^^’ It would actually be fun if you DID improvise a translation. My French is decent so I’d probably crack up laughing.

**Sam:** Everything on the menu sounds delicious btw. Christ! There’s no prices. Are you trying to impress me with the amount of money you have?

**L- Mystery Man:** I see you’re set on insulting me. That’s fine. No. We can do rundown burger joint the next time if that’s your schtick. But I’m well off and if there’s one thing I’ve learned to be worth wasting money on it’s good food. This restaurant has food good enough to give you a boner and that’s why we’re here, not because of their prices.

**L- Mystery Man:** Would you be impressed by the amount of money I have? In that case, I have a lot. I wouldn’t be averse to spend a filthy amount of it on you. I’m a good choice for a mate. (wink)

**L- Mystery Man:** Personally, I prefer simplicity though. A choice
that didn’t sit well with previous partners...

L-Mystery Man: If I’m coming across as desperate, it’s because I am.

L-Mystery Man: I’ll confess that this wasn’t my first choice for our date. I tried to be realistic in my plan though and I figured it would be easier to coax you out to eat in a nearby restaurant than to sweep you off on a surprise trip to Sardinia, Italy, for a meal. I think for that to work we’d have to be actually dating beforehand.

Sam: You’d take me to Italy?

L-Mystery Man: Yes. There’s this small fish restaurant on a narrow cobbled street, high up on a hilly fishtown. You can’t actually see the sea from there, just hear and smell it since it’s on the other side of the restaurant.

L-Mystery Man: But the food is fantastic. You just order today’s catch and they bring you a platter of small barbecued fish that melt on your tongue. You never get the same combination of fish two days in a row because it all depends on what gets stuck in the nets, but the taste is equally heavenly.

L-Mystery Man: Afterwards we would have gone to one of the many small piazzas and gotten ourselves some homemade Italian ice cream, then strolled along the street overlooking the ocean below. Stopping for drinks at random open-air bars.

L-Mystery Man: The day after that we’d stroll down to the beach below the town and walk for miles. There are small shops and stands along the edge of the beach where we’d stop to look at handcrafted goods and jewelry. We’d eat the best pizza you’ve ever eaten, ordered by the meter, and top it off by tiramisu I’ve yet to find any place in America to compare to.

L-Mystery Man: We’d probably argue half of the time. The level of passion between us would make up for it.

Sam: You’ve really thought that through. (You write REALLY fast btw!)

L-Mystery Man: I have. I’d have booked us separate rooms with double beds, not wanting to be presumptuous, but hoping one would go unused. (I answer a lot of emails by phone.)

Sam: I’m pretty sure one would. As I’d have hoped you’d end the date by fucking me into the mattress like it was my purpose in life.

L-Mystery Man: Isn’t it? (wink)

Sam: Screw you! ;) Now I’m going to deny I ever wrote that. And if you were planning to dazzle me with taste tonight I’ll go with the chef’s 9 course tasting menu.

L-Mystery Man: Wise choice, darling. That’s what we’ll order.
Incoming call: Dean

“Heya, Sammy! What the fuck’s up?”

“Nothing. What do you want, Dean?”

“What do I want? You’re kidding me, right? You’ve gone off grid for almost five days, not answering your phone, not opening your fucking door, and when I call your office they tell me you’ve called in sick. Unless you’re on vacation *you’re never sick*! So don’t try to bullshit a bullshitter, Sam. ‘Nothing’, my ass.”

“I’m fine, Dean. And now’s not a good time. I’m… I’m kinda on a date.”

“Yeah, right. You’re at home, isolating yourself. Don’t lie to me. I’m worrying my ass off over here.”

“Okay, yes, but I’m still on a date. Kinda. It’s a virtual date.”

“Wanna run that past me again?”

“Look. Um. It’s mystery man. I’m texting with him.”

“Uhuh?”

“He’s at a restaurant. He said he brought me along for a date, made me choose the meal. He’s sending pictures of each course, describing them. We’re talking about pointless stuff and flirting a bit. It’s taking my mind off of things.”

“What things, Sammy?”

“Look. I don’t want to talk about it right now, okay? Call me some other time—”

“No fucking way! I’ve been calling for days and now’s the first time you’ve picked up. I need a fucking update, Sammy. Last time you were like this I left you alone and then what happened? Cut me off now and I’ll break your fucking door down, okay? Cas can’t deal with me going into burning buildings, so I don’t. I can’t fucking deal with you going AWOL ‘cause I’m stuck imagining worst case scenarios and I don’t ever, ever want to come home to find my little brother in the tub with his fucking wrists slit again! You go down that road again and I’ll fucking kill you, you hear? I’ll fucking follow you, Sam. No bullshit. I can’t deal. I can’t fucking *deal* voice cracking* … Please just tell me what happened. Please.”

“…. *deep breath* Alright. I ran into Lucifer at Gabe’s.”

“Yeah, I heard. Seemed like you were gettin’ pretty cosy by what I was told.”

“Yeah. I guess. He asked me out.”

“And?”

“We kissed.”

“Do I need to drag everything out of you sentence by sentence? Then what happened? I still don’t hear anything bad happening. He stood you up for your date or something?”

“No. I said no.”
“What? Why the hell would you do that for?! You’re head over heels for this guy for fuck’s sake!”

“I can’t, Dean! Since Jo refused to take the offer, he’ll destroy her life and I can’t betray her by consorting with the enemy!”

“Betray her? She fucking brought this on herself! Sonnova— *repeated slamming noise* Fuck! Now I’ve gotta buy a new phone. The screen on this one just broke.”

“Did you just slam your phone repeatedly against something?”

“So what if I did? There’s no one else around to punch. Go back to your cyber date with Lucy’s other dad. I’m all for that. Quirky fucker, ain’t he?”

“*soft chuckle* Yeah. He is. I like it.”

“That’s good. And next time I call you pick up, okay?”

“Okay.”

“Fine. Take care of yourself, Sammy. We’ll fix this. I’ll fix this, alright?”

“Sure, Dean.”

“Bye.”

“Bye.”

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L- Mystery Man: Did I say something offensive to put you back in radio silence mode?

Sam: No. Sorry bout that. Dean just called. And you say offensive things all the time. It hasn’t scared me off before so why would it now? ;)

L- Mystery Man: Well, darlin’. Maybe you’re a fragile little flower today? I just don’t know.

Sam: There you go, being offensive again. ;)

L- Mystery Man: At least I’m using terms of endearment. Give me some credit, will you? So what did Dean want that couldn’t wait?

Sam: He was just worried about me. It’s kinda funny. He thinks he can fix things.

L- Mystery Man: Maybe he can.

Sam: No he can’t. Nobody can. But I let him think, I think he can so he won’t fret too much.

L- Mystery Man: Don’t underestimate your brother. He strikes me as something akin a force of nature.

Sam: Yeah, right. Like a tornado, or a bushfire. Not exactly known
for being the “fixers” of nature.

    L-Mystery Man: I’ll have faith in your brother if you don’t.
    (Also, I’d say bushfires ARE the fixers of nature in their own way.
    But that’s a discussion for another day.)

Sam: lol ^^ Okay I can see what angle you’re aiming for, but still.
So... I’ve had fun tonight. I’m actually getting a bit sleepy. I’m gonna
sign off to see if I can get some shut eye.

    L-Mystery Man: Can I drop you off outside your house after this
date?

Sam: Sure you can.

    L-Mystery Man: Can I kiss you goodbye?

Sam: I’d like that. :)

    L-Mystery Man: Can I come in and do that thing where I fuck you
into the mattress that you mentioned earlier? (wink)

Sam: LOL!! No you can’t! X) Not tonight. But nice try. ;)

    L-Mystery Man: Oh well, can’t fault a guy for trying. Sweet dreams,
Sam.

Sam: You too. Good night! :*

Chapter End Notes
Lighting A Bushfire

Chapter Summary

Lucifer comes home from his virtual date with Sam and receives a phone call from Dean. :)

Chapter Notes

And thanks to Mizz_Kitty21 for catching me writing "collage" instead of "college". -.-' What would I do without you?

Lighting a Bushfire

Investigation of lost battles

Incoming call: Dean Winchester
“Hi, Dean. How are you?”

“Heya, Luce. First off, I’m gonna need a play by play as to what the fuck actually happened after Gabe’s. Second of all, you owe me a phone.”

Lucifer chuckles and kicks off his shoes. Mikey is spending the night at the neighbour’s house and his own house seems eerily quiet with neither cat nor dog at home. “And why do I owe you a phone?”

“Because I accidentally slammed this one onto my kitchen table a couple of times until the screen broke and I need to blame someone else for it.”

“Accidentally?” Lucifer throws his head back and laughs. “Good one. You’re at home?”

“Yeah, I am. Why?”

“Let me call you back in a minute…” Lucifer hangs up without waiting for confirmation. He visualizes what kind of phone Dean’s using to remember if it’s an Iphone or Android. Seeing the phone in his mind he hits Bela’s number on speed dial.

“It’s 9 o’clock, Luci. What do you want?” she snaps as a reply after first ring.

“I need you to do something. If you don’t feel like it, delegate. Just make it happen,” he snaps his fingers by the speaker to accentuate his wish.

“I get it. So what do you need now that’s so important?” she answers impatiently.

“I need the a Samsung Galaxy S-whatever-is-the-latest-model, brand new and ready to use,
delivered to this address...,” he rattles off the address, “...within 20 minutes. Preferable with all the extras that you can get for it. No provider lock.”

“That’s all?”

“That’s all. Now go.”

“Fine.” She hangs up and he can practically hear the face she’s making.

He calls Dean up again and sits down in his couch. “Alright, dude. What was that all about?”

Dean asks rather grumpily in way of answering.

“I’m thinking of buying my secretary a condo,” Luci answers, evading the question. “You think she’ll like that?”

“Why?”

“Because she’s simply the best,” he says, studying his nails.

“At what? Serving below-the-desk duty?”

Lucifer laughs. “No. I doubt I could afford those services from her. But she’s something special and I want to keep her. I think she’s only working for me to hide from the cops or something similar, and I need her to see the benefits of staying on.”

“In that case I’m sure receiving a random condo might do the trick, and do you have a job opening for me?” Dean jokes.

Luci laughs again. He’s feeling rather carefree after the ‘date’ he had with Sam tonight, despite everything. “Actually, should you ever want a job I could put you up as an investigator for Venus Rising. But I love to spoil those I genuinely care about, so you don’t need to work for me to get something. Just ask and you shall receive. I feel pretty confident by now that money is not the reason you’re keeping me around.”

“You’ve got that right. So. Real talk. Gabe sent me no less than three videos he took of you and Sam on his phone. All I saw was fucking heart eyes all around, okay? For a moment it looked like you were cuddling for god sake! So whattafuck?”

“I took your advice.”

“What advice was that?”

“That if something was going to happen I needed to take care of it myself. And it worked. For awhile…”

“Yeah…? And…? Sammy said you kissed.”

Lucifer gets a moronic grin on his face just thinking about it and falls back to lie on the couch, running a hand through his hair, tugging lightly. “I think kissed is the understatement of the year, but sure, let’s go with that.”

Dean groans. “Come on, man. I don’t wanna drag everything, word by word, out of you too. Just spill the beans already!”

Luci sniggers and feels his cheeks heating up. This was Sam’s brother after all. “If you insist. I walked him to his car where I asked him out. He said he couldn’t so I boxed him in against the
side of his car, declared my true intentions and feelings towards him as best I could. He didn’t say anything, so I told him to tell me stop and leaned in for a kiss, giving him time to protest. He didn’t. In fact, the intensity with which he reciprocated blew me away. We didn’t just kiss, Dean. It was full on make out with frottage to boot. Is that detailed enough for you?”

“It’s a helluva lot more than I got outta Sam, that’s for sure! Hold on, there’s someone at the door…”

“I’ll hold,” Luci answers and looks at the time. Ten minutes since he called Bela. She was definitely getting a condo.

Dean brings his phone with him so Luci has the pleasure to listen to the conversation. “Delivery to Dean Winchester, Sir,” the voice of a young man says.

“That’s me. I didn’t order anything.”

“My job is just to deliver, Sir. So if you could just sign here…”

“Yeah, yeah. Alright…”

“Thank you, Sir. Have a good evening!”

Luci hears the door close then Dean’s back. “Just got some weird box delivered.”

“What is it?”

“Fuck if I know.”

“What are you waiting for? Open it! I won’t say another word until you do,” Luci threatens, withholding giggles.

“Allright. Alright. Jeez. Curious fucker, ain’t you.” Luci hears some slamming, then the distinctive sound of a knife slicing through packaging tape, then… “Holy fuck! Jeezus, Luce, you didn’t!”

Lucifer laughs, the content feeling of satisfying the needs of his loved one’s filling his belly.

“Man, I was kidding! Dammit. Fuck. Thanks. But fuck! How did you manage this so fast?”

Luci hums in contentment. “I’m the Archangel of free will. I’ve got powers, and I’m not afraid to abuse them.”

“Yeah, no shit. I could have bought one myself, you know?”

“I know. I just wish I could have seen your face.”

Dean chuckles. “I bet. Look, I’m no good at receiving gifts. I still have the stupid too-proud-for-charity in my backbone. Cas is trying to wean me off it because he loves giving gifts and… I’m trying to say thanks, that’s all.”

“It’s not charity, Dean. It’s a token of affection. And you’re welcome,” Luci answers with a fond smile.

“What? You two read the same textbook or something? That’s exactly what he says,” Dean says with aggravated amusement.

“He’s a smart man. You want to play with your new toy or do you want to me to continue?”
“Keep tellin’ me about what happened. I’m pretty sure it’s gonna make me mad so if the line suddenly dies that would be me accidentally hurling the phone at the wall. Repeatedly. It’s a character flaw. At least now I’ll be able to call you back.”

“It’s quite alright. Tell me if you need any furniture replaced when you do.”

“What? No anger management speech?”

Luci chuckles humorlessly. “That would be throwing rocks in a glass house. Me? I tore up the neighbour’s garden. I was going to redo it for him anyway. I must credit the man. When you find your neighbour furiously tearing at your garden with a pick, only dressed in pj’s at 3 AM in the morning I doubt many would just sit down to watch on their porch, and then come out with a cup of tea when the intruder ran out of steam. I’m sure I wouldn’t. He’s quite a special man. I hate feeling powerless, Dean. And going from the highest high to hitting a rock wall… I didn’t handle it all that well.”

“Huh. Yeah, Sam isn’t handling it well either. So what happened? You were making out and all was well, and then?”

“His phone rang. It was Harvelle. After that he said he couldn’t, and shrank in on himself. Away from me.”

“Sonova bitch!”

Lucifer hears a bang and the sound of something wooden breaking. “I’m pretty sure that wasn’t your phone,” he says with a smirk.

“Yeah, well, I never liked that fucking door anyway. I’m so fucking pissed off at Jo right now you have no idea. She should have taken the fucking offer before the deadline ran out.”

“The court date may be set, but technically, it’s not too late until we’re actually in court,” Luci tells him. “Under normal circumstances if I wanted certain results I’d have used less courteous ways of persuasion to bend people to my will. But Harvelle is someone you both care about, and Sam is not some material prize to be won. He has to choose for himself.”

“Sam’s loyal to a fault. He’d never choose to do something he thinks is selfish if it comes with a cost to someone in the family. But hold on, the offer’s still open?”

“Yes.”

“Can’t I just pay you and you can tell them your client withdrew the accusations by himself?”

Lucifer sighs and rubs his eyes. “No. For multiple reasons. The same reasons I don’t just pay off my client. I was going to, by proxy. None of you would find yourself without funding for very long. Just so you know.”

“I had deducted that already,” Dean says, making Lucifer smile.

“Bottom line is that Sam isn’t a horse to be bought and sold. He has to make his own choices and I refuse to lie to him. Lies of that proportion blows up in your face, if the goal is to have a relationship with somebody.”

“What about the texting thing you’ve got going on?”

“I’m not actually lying to him. Every word I tell him is true, I’ve just neglected to mention who I am, what I do for a living, and what my name is. I’ve even in a roundabout way told him I pulled
“an all nighter with you when I didn’t answer his text in the middle of the night.”

“You’re kidding?”

“What is it with you Winchesters having to question everything I say?” Luci snaps irritably, puts his phone on speaker, opens up his text conversation with Sam and scrolls through it. “No. I’m not kidding. He woke me up with a text in the middle of the night and then got all regretful about disturbing my sleep, since I hadn’t responded to him the first time he texted me at night. My exact words, I’m reading aloud from the convo now, was ‘Who knows? Maybe last time I left my phone at home and was out “cheating” on you with that notorious brother of yours you keep mentioning all the time?’... His response was ‘Yeah, right. Actually... I think you and Dean would make great friends if you met.’”

Dean lets out an incredulous laugh. “Shit, man. You’ve got ice in your veins. He’s gonna be a pissy little bitch if he figures out that shit was true.”

“Mmh,” Luci hums noncommittally. “I thought he’d put the pieces together after our impromptu lunch date at Gabe’s. He didn’t answer any of my texts for two days. Not until I inquired about Lucy’s whereabouts. She hasn’t shown up at my house since the incident. He told me she was keeping him company. He also told me he’d cheated on me, betrayed a friend, and wanted to be left alone for awhile. I could only hold myself back until today.”

“The little shit. I hadn’t heard from him at all since that thing at Gabe’s. I was worried sick. The cyber date thing you pulled was gold by the way. Keep it up. He should not be granted too much time alone or he gets lost in bad headspace and... It doesn’t matter. Just. Keep wooing him, Luce. We’re going to fix this.”

“I’ll have faith in you because I don’t know how. But tell me Dean, why are you so invested? Honestly. It feels like you’re going above and beyond what’s normal. Even if you do like me.”

“I just want my little bro to be happy, that’s all.”

“There’s no ‘just’ in the amount of energy you’re spending on this.”

“Alright. There’s more to it. But it’s between me and Sam, okay? That’s his story to tell. But me an’ him? We’re close. Like, real close. I swear, every fucking shrink I’ve gone to have told me we’re too codependent and it isn’t healthy. That we should fucking try to break out of it. Fuck that shit! Me an’ Sam, the only reason we’re even alive today is because of how close we are. I’m afraid to think what could happen if we did break that bond. Instead, the people we surround ourself with are people who just accept it straight off. Cuz whoever dates or befriends us, get the other brother as a package deal, right?”

“Like me and Charlie. If she comes back.”

“Yeah. She’s already part of the family and I know you won’t be jealous of me an’ Sam.”

Luci chuckles. “Hardly.”

“Okay so I’ve got a call to make. Call you tomorrow?”

“You do that. Say hello to Cas from me.”

“Will do.”

After they hang up Luci lies smiling for awhile, enjoying the aftermath of his stupid date idea that had coaxed Sam to interact with him again. It doesn’t take too long though to remember how it
had felt kissing Sam, how everything for a brief moment seemed so clear. Like a missing piece of
his soul had just settled into place. It had been a hallelujah moment more intense than anything
he’d experienced before. It wasn’t just lust and simple attraction, it was a fucking homecoming.
Like getting to draw breath again after being submerged in water too long. And then it had ended.
The way Sam had just deflated in utter defeat and his body language speaking total finality in the
decision. And there was nothing Luci could do about it. He’d lost. He’d sorely misjudged the risks
involved. He’d compared them to Lilith and the pain she brought him. They’d been together for
four years before he found out the truth. Sam and him had one date (he counted the lunch at
Gabe’s as a date), a few minutes of making out, and still, losing him hurt more than finding out
that Lilith had another guy on the side during their whole relationship and that she and this Alistair
guy had targeted him for a romance scam, planning to get their hands on as much of his
inheritance as possible, by marriage and divorce.

They had probably thought it would go alot faster than it did. Lilith was a masterful actress and
manipulator, but Luci was stubborn and set in what he wanted. They had failed to break his and
Charlie’s tight friendship for one. Luci shudders to think how close they’d been to succeeding in
conning him. One of Lilith’s methods of manipulating him had misfired. She’d accused him of
cheating and blown off a weekend they had planned to spend together. Little did she know he had
planned to propose that very weekend. He’d gotten so hurt and pissed off, he threw away the ring
and decided not to try to propose again until he finished college. It was his salvation, as he a year
later had walked in of Lilith and Alastair discussing their plans and fucking each others’ brains
out. They never even noticed he was there.

All that and still, this was borderline worse. Possibly because Sam had never wittingly deceived
him, and all those qualities that he admired in Lilith that turned out to be an act, were real in Sam.
Everything about Sam was real, and Luci was hooked like he’d taken a hit on the most addictive
drug on the planet. The fear that one hit was all he was going to get, was soul crushing. He
wonders if this is what it feels like for Dr. Who’s companions once they’ve been dropped off on
earth and left in the dust.

However much he wanted Sam, he couldn’t just force himself on him. Or rather, he could. But
you don’t do that to someone you respect, if you want them to stay. Then you took away
something vital from them, something Luci had fought his whole life tooth and nail to keep. The
right to autonomy of body and soul. Plus, that would make Sam (and Dean) lose respect for him if
he went that way. He’d over and over thought about losing the trial on purpose, just to free Sam
from the guilt of being with someone who’d destroyed the life of an adopted family member. But
that would mean he’d lose respect for himself and that was equally bad. He wanted Sam to like
him for who he was, and going down that road he’d have to pretend he was something he wasn’t.

So he dissociated as best he could and tried to auto-pilot his way through work until he could go
home, where he seemed to have a constant lump in his throat. He had no functioning internal
armour against feelings this intense. It clouded his mind and made him stupid, unable to see
solutions. So he put his hope and faith in Dean, as Sam could not. And tonight’s pretend date had
given him another nugget of hope. Because hope, however fragile, was all he had.
Chapter Summary

Luci considers desperate measures. Sam gets a visitor.

Chapter Notes

Important!
The views on anti-depressants expressed here should not be taken as a guideline for your own decision to use/not use them, if you've never tried it and are severely depressed. What works for some doesn't work for others. You should never feel too proud to try it because there's no shame in taking medicines when you're sick. But also remember, there are no medicines that will just make everything better like magic.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Secret Life of Dean 101

Stormtrooper

It’s 5 AM in the morning on the sixth day that Luci wakes up to the sound of an incoming text. Bleary eyed he reaches out for the phone, opens the text. For a moment his heart starts pounding and he thinks the dreaded time when Sam figured out who he is, is here. It makes him fully awake instantly. Then his brain catches up, this is not his Sam-phone—still lying quiet on the bedside table—but his regular phone.

Sam: Can’t you just lose?

Lucifer: I can.

Lucifer: Is that what you want?

Lucifer: If you think about it. Is it what you really want from me?

Lucifer: I’d be sacrificing a big part of myself to not do my best --betray my own client, my self-respect, my beliefs, my morals, and ideals.

Lucifer: Would you still respect me if I did?

Lucifer: I’m Machiavelli to your Dalai lama, Sam.

Lucifer: Gandhi said “Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.” Basically that is my only strength.
I did not bend when doing so meant losing my family. Should I do so now, it will make me resentful towards you for asking it of me. I will full on HATE Jo for it.

**Lucifer:** Will you make it worth it?

**Lucifer:** Do you think it’s worth it?

**Lucifer:** Tell me Sammy, because there’s a fucking hole inside of me where you should be. I’ve barely gotten a taste and now it’s hard to breathe without it.

**Lucifer:** If I sound desperate it’s because I am.

**Lucifer:** Sorry for this, Sam. I’m shit at knowing what to do or say when I’m in love.

**Lucifer:** I’m willing to break a lot of “I would never’s” for you Sam. But I know myself well enough, that anytime I do there is something actually breaking inside of me and each crack will fester.

**Lucifer:** Yet I’ll let you hold the power to decide that for me. Just know what hangs in the balance.

**Lucifer:** Do you want me to lose on purpose, Sam?

**Sam:** No. Not like that.

**Sam:** I just wish...

**Lucifer:** So do I.

**Lucifer:** You’ll just have to beat me fair and square.

**Sam:** You think I can? Honestly?

**Lucifer:** No.

**Lucifer:** You won’t be easy to beat though. Not like most. I saw you in court. In the future? Yes. But you have some ways to go before you can.

**Lucifer:** As my honest opinion.

**Lucifer:** It’s up to you to figure out if I’m conceited or self-aware.

**Lucifer:** I miss you.

**Sam:** Lucifer, I can’t do this. You’re making it harder. I can’t. I can’t. I can’t.

**Lucifer:** You’re wrong, Sammy. You can. But you won’t. There’s a significant difference. You won’t.

**Lucifer:** Can’t blame a guy for trying, right?

There’s no more response from Sam and Luci gets the impulse to throw his phone at the wall in a
hurt-driven fit of rage. He doesn’t.

Sam: Can you send me a selfie?

L- Mystery Man: No. You want to see my face, either come over or look me up online.

Sam: How can I find pics of you online when tell me your name?

L- Mystery Man: Ah. There’s a twist to that. See if you search my name you’ll find nothing. It’s not my name you need to search for to find them.

Sam: An alias?

L- Mystery Man: No. And I won’t tell you more. You’ll have to figure it out all by yourself.

L- Mystery Man: Or come over.

L- Mystery Man: I imagine it sometimes, you know? You doing exactly what your cat did. Just showing up in my house, walk around a bit inspecting the interior critically without a word, then go grab a beer in my fridge and sit down in my couch. Changing the channel uncaringly about what I was watching and complaining about the brands I keep in my fridge, demanding I go out and buy what you want to have.

Sam: I would never do that.

L- Mystery Man: A man can dream.

L- Mystery Man: Also, when I’m focussing hard on my work you’d get out of the couch, walk over to my desk and straddle me, demanding cuddles right that minute.

Sam: LOL That sounds kinda selfish...

L- Mystery Man: On the surface perhaps. I would whine a bit about it too. But think about it. What do you feel when Lucy does it?

Sam: I love her for it.

L- Mystery Man: There you go. Don’t believe me when I get grumpy about cuddles. I’m constantly affection starved. I may not always want touch, but I think I need it more than I care to admit to myself.

Sam: Noted. :)

Sam: Do you think it’s possible to be in love with two persons at once?

L- Mystery Man: In theory? Yes. Why? Are you in love?

Sam: Yeah. I guess. Would it be fucked up if I’m in love with you,
even if we’ve never met?

**L- Mystery Man:** No. And my door’s unlocked. I live on Heather Pine Rd. No. 13.

**Sam:** That’s just a few streets away from me! I live on Quiet Willow Rd.

**L- Mystery Man:** I know. I looked it up.

**Sam:** You’ve been here?

**L- Mystery Man:** Not that kind of stalker, Sam. I respect your privacy. You should come here.

**Sam:** You don’t think I respect YOUR privacy?

**L- Mystery Man:** I keep inviting you over, jackass! You’re welcome any time you want. I don’t know how I can make myself much clearer.

**Sam:** I don’t think I’m ready for that.

**L- Mystery Man:** That’s your call to make. Now that you have confessed your feelings for me, which are reciprocated btw, who’s the other one?

**Sam:** The guy I cheated on you with.

**L- Mystery Man:** You didn’t cheat, Sam. Trust me on this. I’m vetoing you on that opinion.

**Sam:** Whatever.

**L- Mystery Man:** Got to go, Sam. I have friends coming over. The good kind, that invites themselves and doesn’t take no for an answer.

(put upon eyeroll)

**Sam:** Ha ha. X) Have fun.

**L- Mystery Man:** I’ll try.

There’s a knock on the door and Sam goes to open it. It’s Dean. He eyes Sam up and down critically. “Jesus Christ, Sammy. When was the last time you showered? Or slept for that matter? You look like shit,” he says and shoulders his way past Sam.

“What are you doing here?” Sam asks and closes the door. He trails after Dean into the kitchen.

“Hello Dean! Nice to see you. How are you doing? How’s Cas? Baby’s running smoothly? Haven’t seen you in a while,” Dean rattles off sarcastically and starts to unpack a grocery bag he’s been carrying. “Just so you know, I’ve got your key back on my keychain. And if you change the lock I’ll break down your door if you don’t open it.”

“It’s been a week, Dean. I’m fine,” Sam protests tiredly and sinks down on one of the kitchen chairs.

“Not in dog years, and you’re a puppy. Don’t give me shit. I’m not falling for that again.” Lucy comes trotting from the other room, meowing loudly as she approaches Dean. He turns around and smiles broadly at her. “There’s my favourite little hellion,” he coos and picks her up. “Been
helping your favourite uncle keep suicide watch, have you?” he says and nuzzles her. Lucy purrs in response.

“I’m not gonna kill myself,” Sam states flatly.

“You damn right, you ain’t. And you said that last time too. I made the mistake of believing you then, and I was too busy dealing with my own shit, to see the lie for what it was. Well, I got myself straightened out since then so my main concern is you.” He puts Lucy down and sneezes.

“I’m not lying this time.” At least right now. He’s a burden to those around him. It would be better for everyone if he wasn’t around. Hell, even Lucy has another home so she’d be fine. The cat had barely left his side for the whole week, going to another room tops. Only going out when Sam went to sit on the back porch and watch his overgrown yard that used to be taken cared of when he and Sarah both lived here. “You’ve seen me. I’m fine. Now can you please go?”

Dean snorts. “Yeah, no. Not yet. Here’s what gonna happen. You’re gonna get in the shower, scrub yourself clean, wash your hair, and shave. After that you’re gonna put some clean clothes on. Meanwhile I’m gonna cook us some food. You’re gonna eat with me whether you’re hungry or not and we’re gonna talk. You don’t have to say shit, I’ll talk. I’ll tell you some shit about myself I’ve been keeping from you for no good reason. Cuz, hey! Why not, right? After that I’ll give you some sleeping pills, cuz you haven’t been sleeping. I’m only giving you six right now. They won’t kill you if you take all at once. It’s half a blister strip. If you need more in a couple of days I’ll give you more. Then I’m gonna go. Are we clear?”

Sam rolls his eyes exaggeratedly. “I’m not five, Dean.”

“I know that, Sammy. Now go take a shower.”

“Fine,” Sam says sullenly and gets up, throwing Dean a glare as he goes.

“Good. And take your time!” Dean yells at his back.

All in all it feels good to shower. Sam stands for a long time under the hot spray, leaning his head against the cold tile. He’s torn between angry annoyance at being told what to do, being touched at the amount of concern and care from Dean, relief for having someone else taking responsibility away from him for a moment, and guilt for being a burden. He goes through the motions of washing himself mechanically. He brushes his teeth and shaves. Puts on a clean tee and a pair of grey sweat pants, and goes back into the main part of the house only to discover that Dean’s been really busy. Not only has he been cooking— he’s cleaned up the living room, bedroom, and changed the sheets. Both the back door and the front door is open to air the house out. There’s some scented candles burning both in the living room and in the bedroom, but mostly the scent of food permeates the air. Sam’s not really hungry, hasn’t been for a week, but his stomach rumbles enthusiastically.

Dean looks up from the kitchen counter and smiles at him when he comes in. “There you are. Much better. I’ve made stew for tonight and I’ve got a lasagna in the oven. I figured we could put a bunch of lunch boxes in the freezer and some in the fridge. Of both lasagna and stew. That way you’ll have food if you get the notion to eat. Brought a bunch of useless snacks too, they’re in your cupboard. Oh, and a pail of Ben & Jerry’s. Plus sodas, milk, juice and more food for Lucy.”

“All that fit in one bag?” Sam asks incredulously.

Dean chuckles and sets the table. “No. I had more in the car. I went by your employer. Cas wrote you a doctor’s note, so you’re officially his patient now. You’re on sick leave for two weeks but can go back to work earlier if you want to. If you need it prolonged it, Cas’ll fix it. He wanted to
put you on antidepressants, but he’s a doctor so the fuck does he know?”

“I can’t. Dean, never again. I’m not tak—”

“Jeez, calm down! Not gonna happen, okay? It may be the solution for some, but sure as hell ain’t for you. I’d rather stick by your side like gum on a shoe than see you zombified again.”

Sam relaxes and sits down. Last time they’d tried antidepressants and it had killed him on the inside. He stopped caring altogether. He didn’t care if he lived or died, didn’t care for people in need, for Dean, for sex, for fun, for anything. He just went through the motions. Didn’t laugh (except faking it when it was expected from him), didn’t cry, did what he was told. Everybody except Dean had said he seemed so much better. Happy with how he adjusted. But Dean had seen him walk into traffic, not because he wanted to die, but because he didn’t care if he did. Dean had broken down in the end, ‘wanting his brother back’. He wanted Sam to be himself—depressed, angry, happy, devoted to causes—anything as long as he ‘was alive on the inside’ and not ‘soulless’. When Sam came off his meds, it scared the living shit out of him how he’d become when he was on them, and he sorely agreed with Dean that internal turmoil was better than not feeling anything at all. “Thanks. But really. I’m just feeling a bit under the weather.”

"Nah, man," Dean says, spooning up stew for the both of them. "You've been deeply depressed for months and what happened at Gabe’s triggered an outbreak or whatever you wanna call it. You don't think I've noticed how you've been feeling? Even before Sarah left."

"I haven't been depressed, Dean."

"Yeahuh," Dean says skeptically, serves them a soda each and motions for Sam to dig in before sitting down to eat.

"Look. I just. I dunno. I'll get over him. It’s not that bad." Sam takes a spoon and gestures with it while he talks. Then he spoons some stew into his mouth. It’s good. Really good. And it makes his body acutely aware that he hasn’t eaten at all yesterday or today.

"Oh you think this is only about him? It’s not. But we're gonna solve that part somehow cuz..." Dean takes out his phone and opens up a video. "Watch this." He hands the phone over so Sam can see.

It’s a video of him and Luci, doubtlessly filmed by Gabe considering the video is shot from the counter. He and Lucifer is sitting really close together, talking animatedly, with eyes only for each other. Sam laughs and Lucifer looks at him as if he was the eighth wonder of the world. Then Sam says something that makes Luci curl in on himself giggling and it’s Sam’s turn to look at him the same way. Luci then spears a cocktail tomato with his fork, leans in close and says something with a big grin and eyebrows raised teasingly, while gesturing with the tomato in front of Sam’s face. Sam darts forward quickly and bites the tomato off the fork, something that sets both of them off giggling, leaning in towards each other so close their foreheads are nearly touching. Then they’re just looking at each other from that position, big warm smiles on both their faces, for at least thirty seconds before the video cuts out. Sam has trouble comprehending that that was what they’d been like.

"Hearteyes, motherfuckers," Dean says. "You can’t hear what you're saying there, but according to Gabe you were discussing fucking politics at the time. Politics, Sam! You know what this video and the two more Gabe sent, tells me?" He raises his eyebrows to show he wants an answer. Sam shakes his head. “For one, both of you are so stupidly in love with each other it’s not even worth teasing you about it. Second of all, he makes you happy. Like, really fucking from the core happy. Oh, and I took the liberty to transfer all three of the vids to your phone using that proximity shit. Don’t worry," he adds when Sam looks alarmed, "I didn't go through your phone."
Relieved, Sam chuckles self consciously and hands Dean his phone back, then goes back to eating.

"Now, I said I would fix this and I will. Cuz I haven't seen you look that in love since Jess. To be honest, I wouldn't care if all you wanted was to cop a feel or two, I'd be set on making it happen either way. See, this is the first time in ages I've seen you be a bit self indulgent. But this is more than that." Dean eats while he talks and Sam remains quiet. "I've considered multiple solutions. From you just dropping Jo's case, which won't work since you're gonna blame yourself if she loses either way, to putting a bullet through her skull, which won't work for the same reason."

"Jezuz, Dean! You love Jo!"

"I do. But don't underestimate the extremes I'll go through, to ensure that I'll never again find you with your wrists slit. I can’t live without you and if I lose you, I'll go on a fucking murder spree until the cops take me out. I come with my own set of issues, remember? And you’re my fucking anchor in reality. Don't worry, I'll only take out people who deserves it. Like that Roman guy for an instance."

Sam's shaken. Dean says it with a straight face and Sam believes him. Sam remembers all too well how Dean was in his youth. One big pressure cooker of internal pain, low self esteem, and rage. He has a good heart and cares for people, but there's also darkness within him that has diminished over the years, making the true explosions rare. That he’d consider shooting Jo is chilling and disturbing. He is very protective of her, even if the two of them argue as much as if she really was his sister. He’d spent a lot of effort training and studying with her before and during her time at the police academy. That he’d actually consider shooting her is nauseating and bone chilling.

"Anyway, I've tried to convince Jo to take the offer, but she won't budge."

"The deadline has passed. The court date is set already."

"Yeah, but Lucifer says that until you're actually in court, the allegations can still be dropped—"

"You talked to Luci?"

"Course I did. And he's as broken up about this as you. He’s being more stoic about it, but I can tell."

"What did he say?"

"I offered to pay him, but he refuses to go behind your back, won't lie to you. Says that you're not a horse to be bought and sold. Plus, I think there was some other reason too that he didn’t go into. I thought about it, and he's right. Both you and Jo would be pissed off, and the way Jo’s been acting she’d probably turn herself in, making a full confession, if we did that. Somehow you’d give yourself the blame for it and we'd still be in this mess. I just don't get how Jo can just keep refusing, when she knows you've got a crush on the guy? And she has the fucking audacity to be pissed off at you for some reason. It’s like talking to a wall. Granted, I haven't been the most civil to her when we talked."

"I don't think she knows."

"What?"

"I've never told her Lucifer is the guy. And she's got reason to be mad at me. She called when I was... when I was kissing Lucifer. I told her I couldn't talk and that I would call her back. I never did. And I haven't been able to muster up the strength to answer when she's called me."
Dean slaps a hand over his face and makes a frustrated noise. "Christ! Jo's behaviour makes so much more sense knowing this. How the fuck would I know? Cas, Gabe, Balt, Meg, and even Bobby knows you're crushing on Luci. I just presumed... *fuck*!"

"Bobby?"

"Yeah. Cas told him when he went to visit Hannah."

Sam bitchfaces him. "You're such a bunch of gossip girls!"

"Yeah, well. It's kinda a big deal when you get interested in someone. I'm not the only one who wants you to be happy. And this guy has such respect for your integrity. It's almost annoying. This would be easier if he didn't. But then again, I wouldn't want him as a brother in law if he didn't."

Sam chuckles. "Don't you think that's a little premature?"

"Nah. I knew I wanted to keep Cas from the moment I laid eyes on him. The same way I think Lucifer will fit in perfectly with the family and make you happy. Although, it ain't up to me to determine how long you're gonna last. My job is just to make sure you get a chance to have a go at it." Dean grins.

"It's not your job."

"It is, because I made it my job. Now I said I was gonna tell you something I've been keeping from you, right?"

"Uh-huh." Sam finishes the last of his stew and drinks from his soda. It wasn't a huge portion but he's stuffed.

"I've been going to shrinks for years."

"You've seen a shrink?" Sam says incredulous.

"Shrink-sss. As in plural. And I've read a shit ton of books on psychology and spirituality and whatever."

"Really? That's great, Dean! Since when?"

"Since after you tried to off yourself. Look, Sam. I never saw myself as a good guy. Even when I was working as a fireman, saving people on a daily basis. I thought I deserved all the shit life threw at me. But you're the best person I know and you certainly don't deserve all the shit you've been getting. So I thought that maybe I'd been looking at it the wrong way. Hence I went to a shrink. First one didn't pan out very well. He said I was a sex addict with commitment phobia and I needed to practice abstinence."

Sam chuckles. "Huh. I just thought you were aro. I mean, if you don't count your romantic relationships, you're one of the most committed people I know. You stick by people you love, like a burr, no matter what."

Dean snaps his fingers and points at Sam. "That's exactly what I said! But the asshole claimed there was no such thing as being aromantic. Fuck him. I read him the riot act and moved on to the next. Course, with Cas in the picture we now know that I'm gray aro or demi or whatever. Frankly, I'm not that concerned with putting a label on it. I am how I am. But just because I don't fit into the heteronormative monogamous compartment or whatever, doesn't mean I need to be fixed. I tried to fit in for years and the only thing that accomplished was diminishing my sense of self worth. So no. That guy could go fuck himself."
"You're monogamous now, so I guess finding the right one was all it took."

Dean sucks in air through his teeth and scrunches up his face in the expression you make when you see someone take a nasty fall. "Yeah. Not quite how it is. But you rather not know and I rather not tell. Just trust me. Cas and I have a handle on it and no hearts are broken."

Sam thinks about Cas and Dean’s commentary on mystery man’s video. Dean remarking on him being hot and Cas answering ‘Do you think he would join us?’ "Wow. That certainly explains a few things." And, yeah. Okay. Dean’s right. Sam rather not hear about it.

"Yeah. Anyway. I went to AA for a while too."

"But you've never stopped drinking?"

"Yup. Remember the period when I only drank rum and coke or gin and tonic when we went out? It was only coke or tonic."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"Come on, Sam. I was soul searching. I didn't know what the hell I was doing and I didn't want anyone trying to tell me what I needed to do. If you guys around me had started to push and be 'supportive' I might have called a quits altogether. The pressure would have been too great, and any road that didn't lead to anything, would have felt like failure."

"I guess I can understand that."

"I decided drinking wasn't the problem and AA is way too religious for me. But I got this piece of the puzzle from it at least." Dean digs up something from his pocket and hands it to Sam. It's a six months marker.

"How long were you sober altogether?"

"Six months," Dean says with a grin. "That's not what's important. Turn it over."

Sam does. On the other side part of a prayer is printed. The first word has been scratched over with a knife until it's barely visible. A testament to Dean's feelings towards god.

"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

"Some wise shit right there," Dean says and points at the prayer. "So anyway. I took away something from everything I tried. Even if some things were just plain stupid, I learned something from it. Figured out my biggest problems and worked with them. My mantra has been ‘it’s not my fault’ for years. Like, it’s not my fault mom died, it’s not my fault dad drank, it’s not my fault Sammy’s girlfriend died, it’s not my fault I couldn’t save that man slash woman slash kid slash pet from the fire. And even now it’s hard to believe it some days. I have to remind myself that my uttermost concern should be me, cuz when I’m happy, being happy for others doesn’t come with a hollow echo deep inside. I’ve been carrying a shitton of guilt and responsibility that wasn’t mine to bear, since I was a fucking embryo, Sam. Any of this sounds familiar to you? I know it does. Our issues are very similar, yet still fucking different because I’m a sadistic asshole and you’re not."

Sam is stunned at this revelation. He knew Dean had become more carefree, happy, and stable tempered during the last couple of years, but this was a whole new side to the story. “You’re not a sadistic asshole, Dean.”
Dean sniggers. “Yeah. I kinda am. I enjoy it a helluva lot when things get uninhibited. Like sex, drugs, or a good fight. I fucking like when I get to smash someone’s face in. And I’m not gonna lie, it does collide with the part of me that’s full of empathy. I’m still a work in progress. I backslide. You, falling into the deep end of the pool of depression? Major trigger. My anger issues and impulse control’s gone to shit this week. Every shrink I’ve seen has said the same thing about us. We’re too codependent, it’s not healthy and it needs to change. Screw them, cuz I don’t wanna change that. You’re the best part of my life under the worst of circumstances. I’m alive cuz of our so called ‘unhealthy’ codependency. They don’t like it? They can get the fuck out of my face.”

He pauses to drink of his soda, then dries his mouth off with the backside of his sleeve. “I’ve been thinking about what I want in my life, what I can’t be without, what’s worth sacrificing and what’s not. How to accept the bad parts of me and reconcile them with the good parts, so I don’t go into an angst fest any time I step out of line. I’m doing a pretty good job of it. Hooking up with Cas accelerated my ‘healing process’ or what you wanna call it, to warp speed. He just takes me for who I am and loves every part of me. I think you and Luce may be an equally good match. On that note, will you fucking remember that it’s not you versus him in that courtroom, but Jo versus his douchebag client. You’re just tools used to fight with. Neither he nor you are ever guilty of your client’s crimes, Sam. You hear me? You’re just providing the best defense you can muster. Do your best, win or lose, then go home and have angry sex with your boyfriend if you’re frustrated about it.”

“But it’s Jo.”

“No buts. She made the mistake, she pays for it. Bottom line is, she can go out and get another job. Maybe not exactly what she wanted, but good enough. Working private security or whatever. There’s tons of jobs. Falling in love, though? That doesn’t happen that often. It’s harder to come by. If she resents you being happy, just because it happens to be with the guy hired to make her pay for the crime she chose to commit, then she’s not a very good friend and doesn’t deserve your loyalty. Got it? None of it is your fault. This is not your cross to bear. Take care of yourself for once.” Dean pauses for emphasis, staring at Sam with raised eyebrows as if he tried to drill his point into Sam’s skull. When Sam doesn’t answer, he goes on. “That’s all I wanted to say. And talking about my own shit like this drains me. You want more of that you bring it up some other time. I had to spend all day gearing up for this talk. Makes me feel vulnerable, okay? So. Now that we’ve done the secret life of Dean 101, I’m gonna take the lasagna out of the oven, fix the lunchboxes and head out. Unless you want me to stay and just hang out. Watch a movie or something?”

Sam smiles a little smile. “I’d prefer to be alone. But thanks.”

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**Chapter End Notes**

Bouts of rage and anger can be another form of depression. Dean displays these symptoms like Sam displays lethargy. But Dean has worked a shitton with himself, more than Sam. For him the worst thing he could imagine in life was losing Sam, which almost came to pass in the past. It was his rock bottom. None of these boys are mentally stable. I don’t give a damn. I lurv them anyway. ^^'
Light on the Horizon

Chapter Summary

With a little help from his new friends Luci sees light on the horizon, meanwhile Sam struggles through the days. His self image isn't the best.

Light on the Horizon

Regrouping

“Heya Wayne! Cas baby! Gabe? The fuck are you doing here!”

Luci comes around the corner of Wayne’s house carrying the last load of flowers they’re going to plant, Mikey trotting happily at his heels, and spots Dean making his round of greetings. “Dean you lazy jackass! You’ve been shirking the heavy lifting duty,” Luci calls out with a grin and Mikey takes off running to greet the newest arrival.

“If you had to choose between going back and forth to the plant nursery toting dirt and bushes, and visiting my brother, what would you do?”

“No heavy lifting, that’s for sure,” Luci agrees. “How is he?”

“Why don’t you ask him yourself, ‘mystery man’?” Dean teases and makes air quotes.

“Is that what he calls me?”

“Yeah. Now what did I miss? Hand me a beer and put me to work,” Dean says, getting up from petting Mikey and taking a small flowery bush from Luci’s hands.

Luci is more grateful for Dean, Cas, Gabe, and Wayne than he knows how to describe. The last week has been torture for him. The texting with Sam has been minimal, or rather, the responses, and he can’t stop thinking about him. It’s like being locked in a dark cellar all his life, getting to go up and see the real world in sunshine, and then be forced to go back into the darkness again. He’s lost weight. Not because he doesn’t eat—he does—but because when the ache’s been too much he’s worked out or gone running. Mikey’s gone with him, but the poor little dog can’t run three hours straight so when he falters Luci’s been carrying him. By now he has a custom made backpack to put the dog in. He’s been preparing Wayne’s garden for a makeover at night, and once he’s done Wayne has insistently come out to sit with him on the back porch no matter what time it’s been, offering a cup of tea, not asking questions. His neighbour talks a lot though, happy to have someone who’ll listen. Now, for an instance, Luci knows he has a son named Cain he hasn’t seen since they boy was five, yet thinks about daily. The mother took the boy and left one day while Wayne was at work, and he’s not been able to find them since. Wayne doesn’t know it, but Dean got on that case like a bluetick coonhound on a cold trail.

Cas has been co-designing the garden with Luci. Unlike Luci’s own bee garden that’s 100% designed for the bees’ benefit, Wayne’s going to be adapted for human enjoyment too. So Wayne can easily move around in it and appreciate it’s beauty, plus have guests over. He won’t keep any
hives, but Luci has built him a big beautiful bug hotel that’s more like an art installment. Today it’s all going up, and it’s going fast between the four of them. Wayne’s arthritis prevents him from helping much, so he provides refreshments and good company. Hell, even Mikey’s helping. Luci took Bobby’s advice to heart about keeping Mikey’s brain stimulated, and has been training him to pick up things someone drops and hand it over, and to carry items from one person to the other. In order to do this he’s using Mikey’s daily kibble ration instead of treats as a reward, doling a kibble out every time he does what’s asked. He also uses rewards such as a brief game of tug or a squeaky toy. So everyone has some kibble in their pockets (except Gabe who has special made onion-free meatballs. Luci thinks it’s okay anyway because Mikey’s active enough to burn those calories) to give the dog when he runs across the yard with one tool or another. He’s a smart dog and learns things fast, loving the work.

Luci has delegated as much work as he can back at the office, spending time at home, or with these clowns instead. He doesn’t sleep much and the hours tick by torturously slow, but company makes it easier to bear. Also, Dean and company calls to check up on him, to just shoot shit for awhile ever so often, like they sense his desperate need for other people and activity to get through the days.

The garden is nearing it’s completion when Luci notices Dean’s gone missing. Except for a couple of small things Gabe and Cas are currently fixing, the only things left to do is start the pump in the little pool and uncork the champagne to toast a job well done, so Luci goes looking for him. He finds him leaning against the Impala on Luci’s drive way with his back towards Luci, talking on his phone.

“No don’t hang up! I’m sorry for what I called you yesterday, but in my defense, yesterday I still thought that you were a selfish little bitch who didn’t care jack shit for Sammy’s feelings, and today Sam told me you didn’t know something that everyone knows and can’t be faulted for it…. Hey, fuck you, Jo. He hasn’t been answering anyone’s calls. He’s fucking depressed. Now if you’d just listen for a minu—…. Yeah. I get that…. Uuhh. ….Yeah, but wait. I’ll send you a video you need to see. Hold on…”

Luci shrinks back behind the corner of his house, listening in as Dean presumably sends a video. After a moment of quiet that seems to go on forever Dean finally starts talking again.

“Did you watch it? Whoa, whoa, Jo calm down!” Dean chuckles. “Yeah, that’s right. That’s Sam and his crush alright. Both stupidly in love, but don’t start planning the wedding just yet, Jo. That right there is the reason Sam hasn’t returned your calls…. uuh…. Nope…. No. And I’ll tell you why. That guy, it’s Alighieri…. Yes. Exactly… No. Because Sam thinks he’ll lose in court and he thinks that you’ll never forgive him for screwing the opposition, accuse him of losing on purpose and whatever. You know how he is. ….Exactly! That’s what I said!…. Yeah. He’s at home dying of heartbeat. You didn’t see him after Brady, I did. It’s bad, Jo. It’s just him and the darkness flying around. So you need to take the offer, and don’t worry about money. Me an’ Cas are gonna cover for you…. Don’t give me that shit, Jo! You think for a minute that in the choice between a house and my brother’s happiness, I’m gonna choose a house?…. Look, just drop by Alighieri’s office tomorrow and say yes, then call me and I’ll transfer the money. Once he gets it, cuz it’ll probably take a day or two, I’ll call you and you’ll go over to Sam’s house and tell him it’s done. Not before that, okay?… Yes. Okay, I’ve gotta go now… Love you too. Bye.”

There’s a moment of quiet when Luci considers how long he should wait before revealing himself, not to raise suspicion of having eavesdropped. Dean takes the choice from him by popping his head around the corner, looking straight at Luci and scaring the shit out of him. “Got all that? Told you I was gonna fix it,” he grins.

“For the love of—! Could you walk any quieter?” Luci scowls at him and Dean sniggers.
"I hear glasshouses shattering, Luce," Dean says and gives him a pointed look. "Anyway, I think she’s gonna take the offer. If she doesn’t stop by tomorrow, call me." He swings an arm around Lucifer’s neck and pulls him down for a noogie. Luci sputters and fights himself free. Finally there’s some hope again.

Dean’s visit was way more helpful than Sam would have thought. Even if one only counted the half of a blister strip of sleeping pills. He took one and was knocked out for twelve hours flat. He felt a bit better, falling asleep in a clean bed on a full stomach. It didn’t last of course. His gut churned with worms of anxiety when he woke up, like it had done all week. He was still exhausted, lacked motivation, still felt like crying for no reason. Still had this itching feeling as if he’d done something horribly wrong and needed to run away from it. Still ached for the what could have been. Lucifer was still the first thought in his mind when he woke up.

The fact that Cas had prescribed him sick leave, and Dean had talked to his employer was a relief though. Whatever Dean had told his boss it’d keep them off his back. He didn’t doubt that Dean had lied, rather than telling the truth—that he didn’t go to work because he was feeling a bit sad. He was just being plain lazy. Every limb felt made of lead and dragging himself between rooms felt like a huge obstacle, sometimes insurmountable. So he didn’t bother until the need to pee got too pressing, lying on his couch or bed. He felt guilty towards his clients. The firm would assign someone else his jobs during the duration of his “sickness” but it still felt like he was disappointing them. He was a disappointment to everybody. Weak, to get like this. And really, why would Luci want him if he found out how weak he was? Why would mystery man for the same reason?

He’d found Lucifer’s account on Spotify. Talk about being a stalker. The guy had a few public playlists, mostly Dean’s kind of music. He’d listen to all of the playlists (except the feel good playlist. He couldn’t bear the upbeat.) and found one song he’d never heard before. “Sideways” by Citizen Cope. The song seemed like an extension of his mood so he’d played on repeat in the background for days. It was surprising Dean hadn’t commented on it.

Whatever he told Dean, (“I’m fine” was the generic Winchester answer for “Everything’s gone to hell, leave me alone so I can die in peace”) his brother’s worry wasn’t unfounded. Sure, he had no thought of killing himself now. But if he didn’t manage to drag himself out of this moodset soon he might spiral into the vast abyss he was lost in after Brady died, when he felt so much guilt, so much of a burden, that killing himself had seemed a good idea. To take one for the team so to speak. In hindsight he could see he wasn’t thinking clearly. No drugs, no alcohol or medication was involved—meds came later—just increasingly dark thoughts about himself. He had sworn to never get like that again and yet. Here he was. Lying in bed like some loser. A disappointment to everybody. He had no right to be feeling like this. He had a job, a house, people who cared for some reason, a cat that by all appearance loved him back considering her behavior this week. So many people had it worse. A little heartbreak didn’t entitle him to just stop participating in the real world. People got their heart broken all the time without ceasing to function. Dean was wrong. He hadn’t been depressed for months. He was just overworked and a bit sad. It doesn’t amount to depression.

He thinks about what Dean told him yesterday. He’s torn between pride for Dean’s work with himself (now that he knew the extent of it) and hurt by being cut out. He also thinks about Dean’s threat to go on a murder spree if Sam killed himself. With Dean, it was probably true. One of Dean’s best qualities is the zealous dedication with which he carried his decisions out. He was all in, for good or for bad. So if he decided to go darkside, he’d be a frightening force to be reckoned with. It could also be an empty threat to make sure Sam would feel too guilty about the possible consequences to kill himself. Either way, Sam isn’t going to.
He’s sure Dean had something important to tell him yesterday but the point seems to elude Sam. It’s awesome that Dean has gotten so far with himself and Sam is happy for him. Admires him for deciding to change. He feels a bit guilty about causing Dean to backslide.

Sam watches the three videos Gabe took of him and Luci. It’s a contrasting mix of emotions it makes him feel. Both butterflies and thrilled affection along with sadness, pain and a nugget of anger and rebellion at being forced to end this before it got started. He quickly pushes the anger (he has no right to feel) away. Jo wouldn’t forgive him. His dreams are full of her hurt judgement. He won’t betray her.

His phone chirps with a text notification.

**L- Mystery Man:** Mikey dyed his own hair.

Sam smiles. Mystery man’s texts raises his mood somewhat. He doesn’t always have the energy and strength to answer them, but mystery man keeps texting anyway, and it cheers him up.

**Sam:** By himself?

**L- Mystery Man:** Yes.

**L- Mystery Man:** [Picture attached of Mikey covered fully in red mud. It’s impossible to tell what his original colour is. He looks very happy about it]

Sam chuckles, a burst of affection in his chest for both the dog he’s never met and its owner.

**Sam:** :) Looks like he’s had fun.

**L- Mystery Man:** He did. We went running in the nearby nature preserve and he managed to find a puddle of water.

Sam feels a hollow longing inside every time these texts come. It always feels like he wants to be there, like he should. He can’t go over there. Can’t make himself. It scares the shit out of him because this what they have feels good, and he’s afraid to lose it. He doesn’t get it. How can he be pining over two persons at once? Maybe, he thinks, it’s because they’re so alike. They think so alike, use similar language and expressions. Maybe he’s just projecting Lucifer upon mystery man. But he gets warm and butterfly-y from his relationship with mystery man too. He’s soo very curious how mystery man looks like.

The short exchange lends Sam enough motivation to get out of bed. He takes a leak then heads to the kitchen, feeds Lucy (Yeah. She’s 100% Lucy now. Mimi was Sarah’s name anyway, and he wants Sarah out of his life. Since he told her not to call she had called at least five times before he got fed up and blocked her number. He never answered. She wanted to leave so she can stay gone), opens the fridge to take a soda and winds up microwaving some stew just because it’s there, staring him in the face, not because he’s hungry. Dean knows him well.

He eats mechanically, washes it down with soda and then goes to sit on his sofa with his laptop. He googles Venus Rising Foundation. He’s been curious about it since last week when he understood it was Lucifer’s. Turns out the foundation has a finger in all kinds of charity work. Mostly education, working to make public education factual and high quality, doling out college scholarships and things like that. It also provides legal help, runs a couple of free health facilities in poor neighbourhoods, and gets involved in events like the Sunshine Hill incident, where it not only goes to take care of the legal retribution, but makes significant changes for those involved, lessening the blow of whatever crisis had befallen the affected. Not so much as gifts, but as solid
grounds from where they could help themselves and remain better off even when the dust has settled.

Sam clicks on the link for the Sunshine Hill project. There’s a description of the event, then also a thorough description to what was done for the neighbourhood, along with a lot of pictures of the re-/building of it. It’s the first time Sam has found pictures of Luci online. Either he’s listed as just “Luke” or not mentioned at all in the picture descriptions. He’s not alone in the pictures, but part of a group of people working. Sam saves two pictures onto his laptop. They’re the only ones where he is the sole focus. One in which he’s working with wood—building the gym—with an expression of intense concentration on what he does. And one where he’s on his knees with a soft, serene expression, planting a flower bush while a magpie is sitting just beside his hands. How the hell he’s managed to get the bird so unafraid eludes Sam.

He ends up going through every photo on the site to find more pics of Luci. There are a few. From sites of disasters where Luci’s been caught on camera helping one way or another, covered in mud, dirt, or ashes. There’s one picture that makes Sam laugh. It’s from where an apartment building had suddenly collapsed due to neglect and forged inspection papers. There’s rubble all around Luci, who’s so dirty you can hardly tell the difference between his skin, hair, and clothes. All is just dusty brown. He’s holding an equally dirty but giggling toddler out on straight arms in front of him, the toddler reaching for him as if wanting to hug. He’s looking at it with his face screwed up in a faintly disgusted and very confused expression. It looks like he’s thinking “What the hell am I supposed to do with this thing?”

After reading through everything he could find on the foundation, both on their own website and on the web, he’s exhausted and nods off on the couch. His dreams are a troubled mess, and he wakes up sweaty and crying without remembering what he dreamt. Lucy lies sleeping as a comforting weight on his belly. There’s two texts from mystery man waiting for him.

**L- Mystery Man:** Mikey misses Lucy. He tried to befriend another cat in her stead today. It didn’t pan out well.

**L- Mystery Man:** [Picture attached of Mikey’s face. There are bloody scratches on his nose and ears. He doesn’t look too bothered though. In the background you can see the lower half of a picture Sam’s seen blurred in the video he received through Lucy’s collar.]

For a moment Sam wonders if Dean could be right about it being Charlie on mystery man’s wall. He decides to pop in to Facebook and look through her pictures for a clue. He never uses Facebook and it takes three times to remember his password. When he’s in he opens Charlie’s profile. Her last post is over a year ago, saying “Missing my Zucchini.” It makes no sense to Sam but he isn’t interested in that. He wants to know if she has any pictures from her college days online so he opens up her gallery. He chooses a folder named BFF’s Forever! <3 when there’s a knock on the door. Thinking it’s Dean he puts the laptop away and goes to answer.
Changing Lanes

Chapter Summary

And just like that, Sam's life is turned upside down...

Chapter Notes

A big thanks to Mizz_Kitty21 for helping me sniff out some (sometimes embarrassing) mistakes, as well as giving me great feedback. :D

Changing Lanes

End of War

It isn't Dean, it's Jo. "Sam! How could you think so lowly of me?" is the first thing she says, looking hurt.

"I don't think lowly of you," he answers, perplexed and uncomfortable.

"I saw the video of you and Alighieri."

“Oh.” Sam looks on the floor and shuffles uncomfortably. “I’m sorry, Jo. I didn’t mean for it to get so far. Don’t worry. I broke it off—"

“You idiot!” Jo shoves him in the chest and then throws her arms around him in a tight hug. “How could you think I would hold it against you? You really think I’m that petty? Because if you do, I gotta sit down and look over where I went wrong in my life when one of my best friends thinks I’m a selfish petty little bitch.”

“I don’t—!”

“Can I come in? We need to talk. I stopped by Alighieri’s office today…”

“Um. Yeah, sure. There’s soda in the fridge if you want…” Sam’s gut is churning nervously. “What did he say? Did he say anything about me?”

Jo frees herself from Sam with a wry smile. “You’re in love with him, right?”

“Look. It’s no big deal. I’ll get over him.”

“I didn’t ask if you’ll get over him, I asked if you’re in love with him? It sure looked like it in the video,” Jo says impatiently and steps inside, beelining for the couch.

Sam trails after her. “Yeah. I guess. Yes. Yes I am. But I promise you, it won’t affect my
"No it won’t, Sam, because the charges have been dropped.” Jo smiles at him and hands him a paper from her back pocket before sitting down.

Sam unfolds the paper, sits down in his arm chair and reads. It’s a written confession by Jo’s accuser, where he says that he lied about the arrest. That he’d gotten the injuries before the arrest and that Jo had hit him once when he tried to headbutt her, trying to escape. He filed the complaints of police brutality as a way of getting vindication at her because he found it humiliating to be captured by a female rookie, especially after overhearing on police radio that dispatch refused to send backup. He felt that considering how he just had beaten the shit out of another man, who was much bigger and stronger than the tiny little wench they sent to get him, he should have been seen as a serious threat. He said that at the time of the crime, he was drunk and wasn’t thinking straight. He was glad he was unarmed when it went down because otherwise he would have shot the cop without second thought, and he didn’t want to become a cop killer. Now that he’s had time to think about everything, he regrets concocting a false accusation of police brutality. He also calls into question what the responsible officer was thinking, by sending a rookie alone to handle such a dangerous situation as it was, and refusing to send backup on top of that. He’s upset because not only did it put the rookie in extreme danger, it also put the public in danger as a rookie with very little experience of the job might panic, and cops are armed. He points out that he was lucky the cop in question was so level headed and professional or he might have been shot. It’s signed and dated the day Lucifer and Sam had their meeting at Luci’s office.

“Wow,” Sam says. “This is… This…”

“Yes, I know. It not only gets me off the hook, even if I deserve some kind of punishment, but it’s also a stepping stone to file a complaint against my superiors at the precinct. Apparently that part of the guy feeling belittled when he heard me request backup and being denied is 100% true, even if the part of him trying to headbutt me isn’t. I didn’t even think much of it when they said ‘You’re on your own on this one’ over the radio since it happens so often. But the guy thought he deserved to be swarmed by cops so his ego was bruised. Would you believe that?” Jo gives him another wry smile.

Sam chuckles, feeling a bit lightheaded, confused, and relieved. “Does this mean…?”

“That I took the offer? Yes. Alighieri also offered to represent me against my superiors if I wished. Free of charge. I’d rather have it be you, but if you won’t I’m going with him. You’ve told me how good he is.”

“So… You and him… got along?” Sam’s brain feels like sludge. After days of living in the darkest recesses of his mind, these rays of light are hard to grasp.

Jo laughs. “Hardly. It was mutual loathing at first sight I’m afraid,” she says ruefully. “We almost came to blows one time. That man moves a lot faster than you’d think by looking at him. And he’s frighteningly strong. A frigging brick wall under that suit.”

“Wait. Did he attack you?”

“Um…” Jo bends her head, blushing, and runs a hand through her hair. “No. I took a swing at him.”

“Jo!”

She holds her hands up defensively. “I know, I know, okay? But he caught my fist midair, twisted and then I found myself pushed up against the wall with my arm behind me and unable to move.
He let me go when I calmed down. I dunno what martial art he practises, but that was not a fluke move. Anyway, we moved past that part.

“But why did you hit him?” Sam asks, baffled.

“Because of you.”

“Me?” Sam’s starting to get upset.

“Yeah,” Jo says sheepishly. “I went there to take the offer so you could get the idea that I didn’t want you to be happily in love, out of your mind.” Jo raises a hand to stop him from speaking when Sam opens his mouth to protest that that’s not what he thought. “And if one watches the video of him and you from Gabe’s, he seems like a pretty likable guy. Plus, I found out that he’s been friends with Gabe for years and Dean loves him. I talked to Dean for like, two hours before going in. I swear, if he didn’t have Cas you two might be fighting over this guy. As Dean tells it, it was bromance at first sight.”

“Really? I didn’t know that. I mean, Dean said he’d talked to Luci, but not anything more than that.” Maybe this revelation should make him mad, and it does, to an extent. But it also makes him relieved and a bit happy to hear that Dean and Luci gets along. Dean’s kept saying Luci will fit right in with them, but up until now Sam had thought he was just being over enthusiastic. If they actually know each other, it’s another thing altogether. Dean hadn’t always gotten along with Sam’s love interests. He had adored Jess, liked Madison and Amy. But he’d hated Amelia, and disliked Brady. When Dean didn’t get along with Sam’s partners it put a great strain on the relationship, because there wasn’t a world where Sam would put anyone above Dean.

“They’ve more than just talked once. But that’s not what I was gonna say. I went up there thinking Alighieri was likable, stepped into his office and just, bristled, at the sight of him. Because the guy I met, was not the same one I saw in the video. Well he was, but still not. He was arrogant, full of himself, abrasive, and looked at me like I was something the cat dragged in. Goddammit, Sam. Is this song on repeat? It’s frigging depressive! Hold on, I’ve got to turn it off.”

Jo gets up and goes to shut the music off while Sam stays put trying to make sense of all this and figure out how he feels about it. Jo comes back with a soda for each of them and sits back down. It’s oddly quiet now after having the same music playing for days. “I still don’t get why you’d hit him because of me?”

Jo takes a deep breath and lets it out slowly. “I got protective and spiteful as we talked. He knows a lot of fancy words for showing contempt, you know. And I got angry and didn’t think he was good enough for you.”

“Jo. That’s not your call to make,” Sam says and bitchfaces her.

She makes a regretful grimace. “I know, I know. He said as much.” She looks horizontally to her left at nothing at particular, like she’s accessing a memory and then talks in a flat voice. “He said you were not my property to govern. That you had the right to make your own decisions, and that I should respect those as well as he does, whether I agreed with those decisions or not. And he said that his intentions towards you were none of my business, and should he end up breaking your heart, he would not be intimidated by threats to his personal health by anyone. Especially not me, since I’m the cause for your heartbreak right now so my motivation is egocentric, demeaning towards you, and hypocritical. That I didn’t care for your well being, unless it fit in with my world view. Which is not true by the way,” she hastens to add. “He said a lot of things, and I may not like him but he’s just as protective over you as I am, so that’s a plus.”

Sam snorts disbelievingly. “You gave him the what’s-your-intentions-and-I’ll-kick-your-ass-if-
you-break-his-heart speech?"

Jo smiles and shrugs apologetically. “Yeah. I did. In hindsight, it was a bad idea. He does not respond well to threats. He also said that if I had additional threats I could just add them to the pile, then had his secretary get this week’s ‘love letters’, which turned out to be really nasty hate mail, some of em death threats. I was kinda shocked when I read through them. Sam, you realise that dating him might put you in harm’s way, don’t you?” She looks a bit worried now.

“We’re not dating. And if we were, you think that would scare me away?”

“No. I just thought you should know.” Jo smiles again. “He has a screencap of you and him at Gabe’s as his desktop background. I accidentally nudged his mouse, waking up the screen, and saw it. I was afraid he was just using you somehow, but that kinda convinced me he isn’t.”

Sam’s belly does a little flip flop. He looks down on his hands and smiles stupidly to himself. He can feel Jo looking at him.

“Sam. You’re blushing,” Jo says with a teasing lilt to her voice.

“Shut up. He makes me feel like I’m a teenager again. Like I’m alive and I dunno… I hardly know him… But with him I get,” Sam stops to search for the right word, “inspired, I guess? And, and, you’re right. He is arrogant, and self-centered and infuriating. But he’s so much more than meets the eyes, Jo. He’s caring and sweet and funny. And he’s so hot. I don’t think I’ve felt so strongly about anyone since Jess, and she died when we were thirteen. It’s kinda daunting.”

Jo laughs. “Dammit, you really are in love! You should see yourself talking about him. You glow, Sam. I can’t believe you’d think I wouldn’t want you to have that. Well, I do. That’s why I took the offer. And your boyfriend, as much as I hate to admit it, is very persuasive. He talked me into going after my superiors. Every argument I had against it, he took and explained why those arguments were the very reason I needed to do it. By not doing it I enable further discrimination and workplace sexism to continue unabated. I would have called him a feminist if it wasn’t for the way he talked to his secretary. I was a bit horrified until she talked back and I realised they were good friends and it was just banter. Speaking of secretary, do you know if she’s into girls?”

Sam grins. “I was horrified too, to be honest. And no. You’ll have to figure that out for yourself. I didn’t know you were bi?”

“I am. Slightly. But the women I’m attracted to are so few, so I might as well be straight. Bela though…” Jo whistles appreciatively and Sam laughs.

“Yeah. She’s hot. But kind of a bitch.”

“I noticed. So, Sam. If you want to pursue Alighieri I’m all for that, whatever I may think of him.”

“Thanks.”

“Now tell me about him. How much gossip have I missed?”

Jo stays all day and ends up sleeping on the couch. They talk and watch two movies, eat the lasagna Dean made. Sam feels a hell of a lot lighter after that. Mystery man sends a couple of texts but Sam doesn’t open them, feeling his gut twist with anxiety when he receives them. He still has trouble falling asleep, but that’s nothing new. He takes a sleeping pill and remains unbothered by dreams that night. In the morning the two of them eat leftover stew for breakfast and Lucy is nowhere to be found. Sam isn’t worried though. She must have been getting cabin fever being cooped up with Sam for a week. He and Jo go for a run together, watches another movie and by
lunch Jo heads home.

Sam’s head is spinning with questions of what to do next. He’s still mad at Dean, and by extension Luci, for not telling him of their friendship. He needs to ask about it and resolves to ask about it the next time Dean comes over. He had forgotten to ask Jo about the money. That’s something he needs to know and shoots off a text to Jo. She responds that Cas and Dean had covered it. He thinks about how to approach Lucifer to ask if the offer for a date is still open. It makes him nervous both with anticipation and trepidation. He needs to gear up and come up with a plan. Then there’s the question of mystery man. If Sam starts dating Luci, assuming he’s still interested in Sam, he needs to break it off with mystery man. Something he doesn’t really want to do. It has to be done though, however, Sam feels it can wait until after he knows if Luci wants him still. It’s selfish, but he doesn’t want to let go until he has no other choice. It will hurt him and mystery man both, and should Luci not want him anymore he’ll have the stranger at least.

In a burst of energy he cleans the house and does his laundry. He jerks off for the first time in a week. He mows his lawn and waters it, watches some TV, does a little training, mainly situps and pushups. He eats, takes a shower, jerks off again, takes a sleeping pill and goes to bed. Not until the day after when he wants to google something does he remember Charlie’s Facebook, as it’s open when he grabs his laptop. He clicks on the folder he was about to open when Jo came. What he finds sends his pulse racing and his head spinning. Because there, alongside Charlie in every picture, is Lucifer.

He’s so shocked he slaps a hand over his mouth, leans back and just stares disbelievingly at the laptop for maybe ten minutes. His mind is quickly putting one and one together and he’s practically numb. He then minimises the chrome window and opens up mystery man’s video, that Dean referred to as a dating ad. He pauses when you can see the photos on the wall. He looks intently on the picture of the presumed Charlie riding on the back of the blond man. It’s still too blurry to make anything out, but the hair colour and body type is right. It’s Lucifer.

“Oh my god,” he say out loud and hits play again. He looks at the bed scene, and when he thinks about what Lucifer might look like without clothes, this is it. “Oh my god,” he repeats and grabs his phone. He looks at the short text conversation he had with Lucifer.

Lucifer: If I sound desperate it’s because I am.

Then he opens up his conversation with mystery man. He scrolls through it and, there...

L- Mystery Man: If I’m coming across as desperate, it’s because I am.

Now that he knows, it’s painfully obvious. And Lucifer has been dropping hints all the way. Like his tattoo of a star with three pairs of wings around it. He’s even hinted at knowing Dean at one point. And then there’s this...

L- Mystery Man: Is it to taunt me with the fact that you have an unfair advantage, having seen my body when as far as you know I still don’t have a clue what yours look like?

As far as Sam knew… He knew all along who Sam was, Sam’s sure now and feel so stupid about not seeing it before.

L- Mystery Man: You didn’t cheat, Sam. Trust me on this. I’m vetoing you on that opinion.

He’s been telling Sam who he is with tiny hints. No wonder he didn’t call it cheating, it was him all along! No wonder he acted with such familiarity around Sam, by the time of their lunch date
they’d practically had sex already, albeit through texts.

Holy shit. I’m not in love with two people, it’s all Luci!

Sam feels mortified and unsettled. He reads through all the text history, putting this into perspective. As far as Sam can tell, there’s not a single actual lie in the texts. Luci’s steered the conversation away or simply hasn’t answered questions about his name, job, or requests to see his face. Also, Luci told Sam that pictures of him could be found on internet, but not by searching his name. The answer to that riddle is open on Sam’s laptop right now. He types in “Charlie Bradbury” in google and looks at the image hits. There’s lots of pictures where Luci is present, not just from her facebook, but hits that leads to fandom, lgbtqa or LARPing sites. “Oh my god,” Sam mutters again then looks through Charlie’s Facebook album. Charlie and Luci were tight. Really tight. There was no question about it. There were pictures from their early college days up to a couple of years ago, when she took off to see the world.

The LARPing pictures particularly makes Sam weak in the knees, because Luci is wearing a fantasy adaption of real knights armour, and he’s unfairly sexy in it. He and Charlie cosplayed at every convention they went to, always as different characters. In many pictures there’s other people with them too. As far as Sam can discern it’s their college friends. It’s overwhelming. Sam gets that hollow longing inside of him, like he wants to have been there. In one picture Luci is kissing a beautiful blond girl and Charlie is photobombing them by making a face like she’s gagging, two fingers pointing into her mouth. The comment says “My zucchini and Lilshit. May she step into moving traffic and be hit by a bus.”

Sam spends hours combing through Charlie’s Facebook, reading comments and statuses. Luci is referred to as bae, boo, my precious, my zucchini, or Luci love. Also as asshole, nerd, sucker, dick and such, but always in an affectionate context. By the time Sam has gone through everything he can find on Facebook and the rest of internet he’s exhausted. His mind is reeling. He merges mystery man with Lucifer in his contacts and shoots off a text.

Sam: Explain to me why you won’t tell me who you are or I will never ever text you again.

The reply is instant.

Lucifer: Because, Sammy. I’m afraid that if I do, you won’t want to talk to me again. And even if this is all I will get from you, it’s better than nothing. I don’t want to lose it.

That makes sense. It’s why Sam didn’t want to go over to “Mystery man”, afraid he’d lose him if it didn’t pan out. He’s not sure how he’s supposed to feel right now. His emotions are jumbled and he feels numbed. He takes another sleeping pill and goes to bed.
Chapter Summary

Sam has a lot of thoughts. And some of them are dirty.

Chapter Notes

Warnings:
- Rape role playing
- Internalised kink shaming

Notes:
This is the chapter that made me tag this story as Non-con. It's very consensual, and yet...
Also, as usual, a huge thank you to Mizz_Kitty21 for Betaing. And thank you all for your comments! I answer them randomly and will try to answer all of them as time goes by. I'm really grateful for them. <3

Forbidden Fantasy

Spoils of War

Sam’s a mess. A different kind of mess than he has been the last week. He’s wound up, high strung, buzzing and nervous. Going through emotions too fast to get a grip. He’s been feeling every emotion between righteous anger, to please-kill-me-now level humiliation for not seeing it sooner, to elation and relief. He hasn’t heard a peep from Dean since Jo showed up at his doorstep. Which means Dean knew that he’d done something wrong, and that Sam was gearing up for a fight. Trying to fight with Dean through the phone was useless. Dean’s the hang-up-in-your-ear type.

So Sam thinks about Lucifer instead.

He’s awake at 4 AM staring at the ceiling, too jacked up to sleep. He’s currently thinking about the sexting with Lucifer, feeling mortified. What must Luci think of him?

Probably that I’m some cheap slut.

But then again, he wasn’t the one who had sent a movie clip of himself coming.

Thinking about that makes butterflies stir in his stomach and his groin twitch. He is angry at Lucifer for playing him, but not as mad as he’d expect to be. Not after the explanation why he got through text. And everything Luci had said, had matched up with what he’d said through texts. Everything. So he’s not as mad as he probably should be. Not after both Lucifer and "mystery
man” had declared "their" interest. He’d thought about it and decided it was genuine. How could he not think so after what happened at Gabe’s? He thinks about what Lucifer said, "All you had to do to happen to me was stand outside a pet store. I’ve wanted you ever since.” Sam kinda wants to call it a lie, but his own attraction had been equally instant and had snowballed from there.

He thinks about kissing Luci, how the world just dissolved into only them and nothing else. How good, and right, and uninhibited it felt. Like being lost in a hurricane, but in a good way. Just thinking about it sends thrills of lust and longing through his body. He reaches for his phone and opens the clip of Lucifer jerking off and coming, wishing he could see his face. (And shit, that was some high level trust he put in Sam to send, considering who he was. Media would make his life hell should this be spread, face showing or not.)

He feels his dick starting to get harder and pushes at it to alleviate the tickling feeling. It has the opposite effect.

He reads through the sexting conversation again, getting more turned on. Now he has the mental image of Luci doing these things to him it's even more arousing than before. He wants to do this again. Like, right now. If Luci had thought badly of him, he would have shown him contempt at Gabe’s, which he hadn’t.

He thinks about the clip Luci sent him with the cat, and Dean’s comment as the camera panned upward. "These are my assets, and this is the shit I'm willing to put up with for you.” It gives Sam an idea. He has an advantage right now. He knows it's Lucifer, and that Lucifer knows who he is. But Luci doesn’t know that Sam knows. It’s the perfect opportunity to find out exactly how much shit Luci is willing to put up with—and how much trust he’s willing to show—and at the same time go full throttle on the fantasy he's been nursing so shamefully all his adult life. They brushed over it when they sexted, and it lit a fire Sam wants to fuel. (How the hell he's supposed to look actual rape victims in the face afterwards is a problem for later.) If Luci doesn’t buy into it, well then he could just go to hell. Dean too for that matter. He’ll die from utter humiliation if Luci rejects him for this. He’d have to move. Go hide in a little town in Nebraska or something. Doesn’t matter. He’s horny and he’s damned well going to do this!

Sam: You fucked up.

L- Mystery Man: What did I do?

Sam: I don't know. Missed our one year anniversary? Cheated? Cancelled something really important to me last minute to work? Took off to UK for no good reason? It’s not important. Bottom line is, you fucked up.

Sam: I just got home and found you asleep. I'm furious and hurt. Go wrong now and you'll never hear from me again. This is your wake up call:

Sam: [Video attached: The camera is placed on the pillow to mimic Luci’s point of view. There are pillows under the comforter, shaped into the likeness of a body. Sam is on all fours, straddling it, glaring down on the camera. He’s wearing black Adidas pants and a grey tee. "You two timing asshole. I've had it. If I'm this unimportant to you I might as well walk out right now, and you can go straight to hell," Sam says doing his best to look sad and angry.]

Sam: This is how it's going to go. You play along or you and
me end right now. Unless I write "STOP" you don't ask me
for consent. If it's too much for you you write "STOP" and I'll
respect that. That's the rules of the game. The only rules. You’re
gonna make me stay with you. You said you can subdue me.
Do it!

Sam: You think I'm leaving and you're gonna fuck me one
last time whether I want it or not.

Sam: Send me a picture of yourself right now so I can
visualise and to confirm you have understood. I want this
fight. I want it rough. No holds, no bars. Own me against
my will.

Sam’s heart has sped up in both anticipation and apprehension. The wait for a reply seems to drag
on forever and he’s close to panicking, regretting this. If Luci says no right of the bat he’ll die of
mortification. It’s a huge thing to ask for. Both trust wise and, well, kink wise. Sam’s convinced
there’s something wrong with him for being turned on by it. He lets out a breath of relief he hadn’t
been aware he was holding when the reply comes.

L- Mystery Man: [Picture attached: The camera is held below
Lucifer’s head, angled down to show his body, naked,
blanket covering his crotch and one leg. He’s half hard
already.]

Sam: Shit, L. You’re so hot! It pisses me off even more.
I'm convinced you're screwing your secretary and I'm
jealous. My intention was just to sneak in, take my stuff
and leave. But then I saw you and couldn't just leave
without letting you know that you're losing me.

L- Mystery Man: Two Timing? What are you talking about, darlin'? 
Christ! It's 4:20 in the morning. Stop being dramatic and
come to bed. (Slow to catch up. Jetlagged from my trip to
UK.)

Sam is thrilled by Luci instantly playing along despite being woken up like this. For a moment he
wonders how he adapted so fast, but then he remembers that Lucifer's into live role playing and
since he's friends with Charlie he probably has played board RPGs too, and who knows what
else?

Sam: Really? You fucking ditch me on our anniversary
to scamper off to England with your secretary. You think
I'm too stupid to figure out what you were doing?

L- Mystery Man: I never took you for stupid, Sammy, but I'm
beginning to reevaluate that assessment right now. I had
to go there because it's a high profile job and my business'
reputation hinges on it. And our anniversary isn’t until the
end of next month. (Getting frustrated by your idiotic
notions. Grabs your shoulders to try to pull you down beside
me to sleep.)

Sam: (Scowls at you and sits up straight, shrugging your
hands off me.) We saw each other for the first time a year
ago this weekend. And you’re not even denying fucking your
secretary! Fuck you! I’m tired of being second priority. It’s
over. Bye. Have a nice life. (Climbs off you and heads for the
door.)

L- Mystery Man: (Panic and anger sets in now I’m starting to
realise you’re serious. I quickly dive out of bed and grab
a hold of your wrist. I yank you towards the bed forcefully.
The force of the pull sends you flying backwards, stumbling.
Your back hits the side of the bed and you land in a sitting
sprawl. I loom over you.) I shouldn't need to deny something
so stupid, Sammy. Why would I want to fuck anyone else
when I can be with you? It’s preposterous! Quit this idiocy
right now! You’re not leaving! (Your landing was painful.
Do you fight me or not?)

Sam rubs his hand over his dick, his breathing heavier now. He pictures it—Lucifer naked,
looming above him, looking every inch of a furious villain. He wonders if his hands would be
clenched at his sides.

No. Not yet. His feet would be wide apart but his shoulders and arms would be relaxed, I think.
He’d be ready for resistance though. Fuck, why is that so hot? How sick am I to get off on this?

He pictures himself sitting on the floor looking up, back aching from the shock of impact. He tries
to be somewhat realistic about his reaction. What would he do? If it was a stranger he’d fight. But
in this scenario he’d been with Luci for a year and this was the first time violence came into it. He
might have been thinking Luci was screwing around, but he’d still trust the man not to hurt him,
so he’d be shocked most likely. Not really believing what was happening, not believing it would
or could escalate.

Sam gets up from the bed and places his phone high on a book case by the wall, he supports it
with random crap and books so it’s standing in the right angle to mimic Luci’s point of view as
best he can. He sets his camera on automatic so it will snap five pictures with a few seconds in
between and quickly sits down on the floor, sprawled against the bed looking up at it. He
imagines the shock he would feel, the disbelief, hoping it will translate to his face. His camera
goes off and he jumps up to inspect the pictures, massaging his dick outside of his pants as he
goes. He chuckles at the pictures. He does look stunned and disbelieving, but there’s no hiding
how his dick tents his pants. He chooses the best one and sends it.

Sam: (I’m too stunned to act, or believe I need to protect
myself against you despite current evidence.) What the
hell, L?

L- Mystery Man: You think you can just throw accusations like that
at me and walk away? (Leans down to come face to face
with you and grabs your hair in a tight grip) I won't take that
kind of shit from you. The only lips I want on my dick is yours.
And I'm fucking well going to have it! (Straightens up and
tugs your head towards my dick. Uses my other hand to grip
it and press it against your mouth.)

Sam sits down on the floor again, leaning against the bed. He tugs at his hair to get the feeling of
what it would be like. He twists his hand harder to make it hurt and squeezes his dick at the same
time, gasping at the sensation. He closes his eyes and brings up the memory of what it feels like to
have a dick pressed against his lips. What would he do? If he’d been dating Luci for a year… it’d
be familiar. It’d be something he wants. In this scenario he’s walking away because he feels rejected and betrayed, not because he no longer wants Luci.

*I’d probably open my mouth on habit alone. I’d still be reeling from shock and then autopilot takes over...*

**Sam:** (I open my mouth to take you in before I’ve even started to process what you’re doing. I still don’t really get the seriousness of the situation. Do you push in to gag me or just tease me with the head of your cock?)

His reactions will be different depending on what Luci answers. He’s not sure what he wants the answer to be. He waits for the answer full of anticipation, stroking his dick outside of his pants. He doesn’t have to wait long.

**L- Mystery Man:** (I just tease at first. Run my cockhead along your lips to smear precome. When you open your mouth to let me in it pisses me off because you’re leaving me. You’re going to deny me this and it’s not fucking fair! So I tighten my grip on your hair and pull you down onto my cock forcefully.)

**Sam:** (I gag and sputter. Push you away by your hips.)

L… what the hell are you doing???

**L- Mystery Man:** Shut up. Is this what you think my secretary does, hmm? (Pulls you down on my cock again. Makes you bob your head up and down on it, fucking back but not enough to gag. Feels so fucking good, I love your mouth, Sam. Sweet and perfect. I’m so angry at you for implying this is the last time I’ll have this.) Is this what you think I’m paying her for? You think I’d bother going all the London to do this when I got a lock on my office door and her on speed dial? Think again and fucking choke on it. (Holds your head firm, preventing you from spitting me out.) I'm tired of all the false allegations thrown my way!

Sam pulls down his pants enough to set his dick free. This is one of the things he doesn’t understand about himself. Brady had generally been a sweet lover, but sometimes he lost control and would do this. Hold Sam’s head and fuck his mouth too roughly until Sam gagged and choked. He’d be too gone on pleasure to remember to be careful with Sam, and Sam fucking loved it. He’d been too ashamed of wanting it rough and careless—wanting an element of being forced—to ask for it. It seemed like he shouldn’t be turned on by it. First off because it’s wrong to force someone, second of all it felt like something must be wrong with him for wanting an element of violence when he’d grown up with abuse. He tries not to think about that now, and envisions Luci’s cock, red, uncut, with a more than decent girth.

He strokes himself, not too fast, he isn’t trying to come yet. He wouldn’t be able to swallow down all of Lucifer’s length. It doesn’t matter. He’d taste salty of precome and feel slick and velvety against his tongue. But he wants to go full throttle on this so he aims for rebellion in his reply.

**Sam:** (Chokes and gags, strains against your hold by trying to push you away with my hands. I don't bite. The idea would never occur to me. Finally gets you off me and turn my head away sputtering and sucking in air.) I bet you DO fuck her at
the office too. And you think I wouldn’t notice? You think I'll just let you, and stay put? Fuck you! (Scrambles to my feet and pushes past you, heading for the door.)

**L- Mystery Man:** (Provoking me, are you? Unwise move, Sam. You just upped my aggression level A LOT.) Yes! You ARE! (Grabs your wrist in a vice grip and tugs you back to face me. Panic has switched to angry denial.) You think I’m just going to let you walk out of here because of some ludicrous notion of yours? You belong to me!

**Sam:** I *belong* to nobody! (Tries to yank myself free. I fail, and throw a punch with my free hand.)

**L- Mystery Man:** (I’m ready for that. Have been since I yanked you to the floor. Catches your fist mid-air and twists your arm, forcing you to spin by the power of your own punch. I let go of your wrist while I twist, making you fly onto the bed. I follow you up on it and backhand your cheek to keep you dazed and confused. How are you reacting?)

Sam’s staring at his phone with his heart pounding hard in his chest, Jo’s description of Lucifer’s move when she tried to punch him an echo in the back of his mind. When he said “I want this fight. I want it rough. No holds, no bars. Own me against my will,” Lucifer really took heed. Normally he’d be burning up with shame by now, because this is so wrong, and he asked for it, which makes him sick and perverted. Yet here he was, breathing rough, cock hard and leaking, jerking himself off to a fantasy where he got himself hit—and he is excited about it. He needs confirmation that he’s not the only one. He needs to know what Luci is thinking right now, or he’ll start fretting.

**Sam:** (send me a pick of yourself right now)

The reply comes instantly, or as fast as it takes to take a pic and send it. It’s a pic from the same angle as the last pic, but now Luci’s kicked the blanket off and is gripping his cock at the base. He looks painfully hard and is leaking so much precome there’s a string hanging down from the top to the hair curling by the base.

Sam fucking moans. No. He’s not alone in this arousal.

He jerks himself off faster, breath ragged. On impulse he slaps his own cheek to mimic Luci’s backhand. His cheek sting harshly and his head falls back towards the bed, eyes closed, fighting the urge to just finish himself off right now. He doesn’t want that. He wants to see where Luci’ll take this, prolong it a bit longer. He reluctantly lets go of his cock and opens his eyes to tap out a response.

**Sam:** (I scramble to get away, roll onto my stomach and try to crawl away from you.)

**L- Mystery Man:** Oh no, you don’t! (A knee by the base of your spine forces you flat on your stomach. I straddle you, grab a hold of your hair and bend your head back, forcing you to arch your back. I quickly grab a hold of the exposed front of your T-shirt and yank it over your head, letting go of your hair in the same movement. I pull the shirt halfway down your arms and spin the fabric, thus creating a makeshift
restraint so I can control both your arms with one hand.)

You’re my little bitch now, Samwise. I’m NEVER letting you go, you hear me?

Sam reads the answer twice before he pulls his tee over his head. Sadly, he can’t mimic this. (You can’t text while having your hands tied behind your back.) But he lets his tee hang onto one arm and twists the fabric to get a feeling of what it would feel like, and if it would work. He comes to the conclusion that it probably would. Especially as he’d probably be stuck in a what-the-fuck-this-can’t-be-happening moment, partially convinced Lucifer wouldn’t really seriously harm him. Just like when he’s fought with Dean in the past, there’s still a nugget of trust no matter how fierce the fight.

Sam: (I’m struggling futilely, spitting curses at you.)
You fucking bastard! You can’t do this!

L- Mystery Man: I’ll do whatever I want, jackass! You’re mine.
You’re my most precious possession, Sammy. I can’t believe you’d think I’d trade myself down when I have this. (Pulls your pants down roughly to your knees and plant a knee on them, further restraining you. Reaches for the lube on the bedstand with my free hand, then grabs your hip to pull your ass up. How much do you struggle?)

Sam gets up and chugs his pants, throws the phone on the bed, grabs his own lube out of the bed stand drawer and crawls up onto the bed. He’s squirts some lube on two of his fingers and bows down in the position he’d be in—head on the pillow and ass in the air. Then he tries to relax, roughly shoving two fingers inside of himself, hissing between his teeth and squeezing his eyes shut at the crude burn. He gives his cock a couple of firm strokes while he fucks himself with two fingers, then grabs his phone, inexpertedly trying to type while keeping his fingers inside of him.

Sam: (I don’t. Realising what’s about to happen I just compress my lips and glare at you while shifting my concentration to relaxation. If I struggle now it would hurt more than I can take. I like the pleasure-pain of the burn, but not blinding pain. You lube up your hand and shove two fingers inside of me, fucking me with them to stretch me. You pretty soon decide it’s enough and lube your cock, pushing in slowly.)

Sam: (Sorry. Hard to write with two fingers inside of me…)

L- Mystery Man: You’re really fingering yourself???

Against better judgement Sam snaps a blurry picture over his back. You can’t really see anything but his ass up in the air and his hand coming from the side to, well… If you know what he’s doing your mind will fill in the blanks. He sends it. He’s too aroused to think clearly. There’s only so long you can keep focus on a texting conversation when you’re as worked up as he is. He hits the voice recording button on the speed menu, drops the phone, and grabs his cock. Panting, he starts jerking off in earnest, working his fingers in and out in time with his strokes. He can’t reach his prostate, it doesn’t matter, it’s the burn and the feeling of something inside of him he’s after. He doesn’t hold back on the ragged sounds he makes, but he doesn’t speak—If he did, Lucifer’s name might slip out unbidden.

He pictures Lucifer holding his hands restrained on his back with the T-shirt, pushing in slowly, then starting to fuck him hard and fast. In his mind he hears Luci’s voice… “You’re my most
precious possession, Sammy. ... I’m NEVER letting you go, you hear me? .... You belong to me!” He comes with a strangled cry, moaning in the aftershocks, then lie panting for a beat before reaching for his phone, stop recording and sending the file to Luci without listening to it. He accidentally smears some come on the screen but he doesn’t care yet. Instead he pulls his fingers out gingerly and rolls over to his side, avoiding the wet spot.

His phone chirps several times, while he’s just enjoying the afterglow. He feels content and fucking liberated, emptied of thoughts. When his heart rate has slowed down a bit and his breath calmed, he reaches for napkins on the bedstand and cleans himself up, along with the sheets as best he can and his phone screen. Then he reads the texts.

L- Mystery Man: !!!

L- Mystery Man: For the love of--!

L- Mystery Man: Fuck, Sammy. Have you any idea how bewitching you are???

L- Mystery Man: !!

L- Mystery Man: [Photo attached: Same view as previous photos but now come covers Lucifer’s hand holding his cock, there’s come by his navel and he’s squeezing his cock, angling it so that Sam can see a drop of come in the slit.]

Sam lets out a tired chuckle and closes his eyes. It doesn’t take long before anxiety starts crawling in his belly though. Dark thoughts filled with guilt and reproach over what they’d just done demands his attention. He tries to ignore them.

His phone chirps again.

L- Mystery Man: Are you okay, Sammy?

Sam: I guess.

L- Mystery Man: You’ve got juice at home? I want you to go drink a glass. And don’t end the conversation here.

Sam: Only soda.

L- Mystery Man: Then go drink a soda, it’s an order. Send me a pic as proof. Put your clothes back on and crawl under your blanket. Eat some dark chocolate too if you have some.

Sam’s unsure of why Luci asks this of him but he obliges anyway, putting his clothes on and shuffling to the kitchen. He takes a soda and a snack, drinks and eats about half before he takes a picture of the snack and soda on the table. He sends it and finishes his prompted meal.

L- Mystery Man: Good. You back in bed?

Sam takes a leak first, then goes back to bed and crawls down under the covers.

Sam: I am now.
Not very good at all, Sam thinks to himself. As the afterglow faded other thoughts hammer at the back of his mind, wanting to be acknowledged. The little snack helped a bit, oddly enough.

“Fine,” he begins to type, then changes his mind and writes “Not A - Okay.”

Sam allows the unpleasant thoughts in the back of his mind come to a fore, gut twisting unpleasantly as he tries to put them into words.

Sam: I feel kinda ashamed for what we just did. I worry about what you'll think of me. I feel as if something is wrong with me for getting turned on by this. I feel guilty for what I just did, when I work with real rape victims ever so often.

L- Mystery Man: I thought you might, so let's divide those. First of all, rape fantasies are amongst the most common fantasies amongst women that I know of. (Don't know about men, my best friend is a woman and it's with her and her friends I've discussed this.)

L- Mystery Man: This was nothing like real rape, Sam. Even if we'd done this irl you were in control the whole time. One word from you and I would not only have stopped, but done everything I could to comfort you and make you feel safe and respected.

L- Mystery Man: Second of all, it's not an odd fantasy for you to have. On a daily basis you protect, care for, and take responsibility for other people. You take on responsibility that isn't yours to bear. This fantasy removes ALL responsibility from you and offers respite. But you're proud, strong, and self-conscious. Ordinary dom/sub would leave you feeling 100% more humiliated as it'd require for you to submit willingly. Being forced allows you to hold tight to your pride.

Sam stares at the texts. He applies the theory to himself and feels relieved. It fits. He thinks of the dream he had when he blew Lucifer under his desk, and Lucifer refused to touch him because he’d told him not to. He had felt so humiliated, unlike he did now. It scared him a bit that Lucifer had him pegged down so well. It also felt comforting somehow.

Sam: I hadn't thought of it that way.

L- Mystery Man: You should. And don't worry about what I think of you. I admire you. Always so strong and caring for others. I don't get how you can keep your heart so open after how life has treated you. This, what we just did? This was you taking something for yourself. Something you deserve and should do more often. I adore you, Sammy. This does not in
any way make me think less of you. Nor am I dumb enough to think that you’d want me to treat you like this irl, outside of a role playing setting.

**L- Mystery Man:** I don't at all think you weak for indulging in this fantasy if that's what you worry about.

Sam’s heart flutters. He feels a hell of a lot better. He relaxes, finally able to enjoy the afterglow. But then a thought strikes him.

**Sam:** How are YOU feeling?

The reply take much longer than the others.

**L- Mystery Man:** I’m fine.

The speed with which Lucifer normally write and the time it took for this answer to come screams to Sam that that’s a "Winchester-fine".

**Sam:** I call bullshit.

**L- Mystery Man:** You don’t need to worry about me.

**Sam:** But I do. I was honest with you. At least pay me the same courtesy. How are you feeling?

The response takes even longer.

**L- Mystery Man:** I'm freaking the fuck out.

**Sam:** Why?

**L- Mystery Man:** I too got off on this. My role was far from innocent...

**L- Mystery Man:** I’m afraid everything people say about me is true, because I really enjoyed the fantasy of taking by force what I want. It goes against my very core belief, the one thing that has guided my life and decisions always. Free will. The right to autonomy over body and mind.

**L- Mystery Man:** I may be ruthless in my job, but in personal relations I've been just as respectful and protective of others’ rights, as I've been of my own.

**L- Mystery Man:** And now? Sam, you're such a precious thing to me. You’re so beautiful, inside and out. You have no idea how much I covet and desire you. I want to give you everything. You’re far out of my league and I am well aware of it. Beautiful people like you don't want people like me.

**L- Mystery Man:** And yet the fantasy you presented me with turns me on just thinking about it. To just TAKE you regardless of what you thought about it. To keep you, and never risk losing you.
**L- Mystery Man:** I never claim to be a good man. I'm greedy, petty, selfish. I know it. But consent is as important to me as breathing. How the hell am I supposed to look myself in the mirror, when I get off on the thought of hurting someone I cherish so much?

**L- Mystery Man:** So I'm freaking out.

**L- Mystery Man:** And I don't appreciate being called out on it.

_Sam:_ But you had my consent.

_Sam:_ Would you have stopped? If we'd done this irl and I couldn't just block your number or whatever?

**L- Mystery Man:** Yes.

_Sam:_ Then I see no problem.

_Sam:_ As far as I know, you've stopped yourself from acting according to your natural impulses and defence mechanisms always. You've been treated unfairly too often. Maybe it's cathartic to let go and give in to the anger inside and just take?

**L- Mystery Man:** Sam. I HURT you. There's no excuse.

_Sam:_ So we're fucked up. Both of us. Making a perfect match, perhaps? When you "hit" me I slapped myself for authenticity. If I'm not allowed to be ashamed of myself for this then neither are you.

_Sam:_ If I was there right now, what would you want to do?

The answer takes a little while before it comes.

**L- Mystery Man:** You hit yourself? How hard?

_Sam_ touches his cheek. It's still warm and tender to the touch. He lights the lamp on the nightstand and uses his camera as a mirror. His cheek is still red, a hand print vaguely visible. He had hit a lot harder than he was aware of in the moment. He takes a selfie with a quirked smile and sends it.

**L- Mystery Man:** For the love of--! You'll be the death of me! I keep saying it, because it's the truth.

_Sam:_ Does that turn you on or do you think I'm messed up?

**L- Mystery Man:** I really don't like to admit it but I'm hard all over again. I picture it being my mark. If you were here I'd want to kiss it. I'd want to caress every part of you I'd previously hurt. Blow gently on those parts and soothe. My marks on your body makes you even more beautiful, if that's possible.

**L- Mystery Man:** With other words it turns me on.
L- Mystery Man: I'm a bad man and you should stay the fuck away from me.

L- Mystery Man: I'll settle for any crumbs you deign to give me, but I want to own you.

L- Mystery Man: If you were here right now, after this I'd want you to fall asleep in my arms. Call in sick so I can spoil you rotten and dote on you when you wake up.

Sam: I don't see how that fits with "I'm a bad man". ;)

L- Mystery Man: Says the guy who's got my bruises on his body.

Sam: I'll just have to give you my own set of bruises when I wake up.

L- Mystery Man: I'm not okay with that. You protecting yourself against me is one thing, you topping is fine. But role reversal in this? No. (STOP)

Sam: How about hickeys?

L- Mystery Man: How about not.

Sam: Challenge accepted. ;)

L- Mystery Man: Good one! You’re making me laugh.

Sam: You still freaking out?

L- Mystery Man: Not as much.

Sam: Good.

Sam: And for the record, I stayed with you. But I'm still convinced you're screwing your secretary.

L- Mystery Man: I'm not. But I'd do anything in my power to fuck her if you walked out on me because of her. If I'm getting punished for a crime I'm innocent of, I'm going to commit it. It’s a less attractive personality trait of mine.

L- Mystery Man: If anyone of us is going to cheat it's going to be you.

Sam: I would never cheat!

L- Mystery Man: You say that now...

L- Mystery Man: Sorry. I'm being unfair. Old experiences has given me a trust issues. Of course you wouldn't. You’d dump my ass if you wanted someone else. I can live with that. (wink)

Sam wants to go over right now. Lucifer is so close. He could go. He could. It'd be awkward as fuck. But awkward or not, Luci probably would hold him and let him fall asleep beside him.

Sam: I'm going to sleep. :-*
L- Mystery Man: Sweet dreams.

Sam: You too.

He doesn’t though. He showers, gets dressed, and goes for a walk.
Chapter Summary

Sam feels oddly empowered by what he and Luci had just done over the phone. So when he gets a mad impulse, he follows through with it.

Chapter Notes

Sorry, not sorry. ^^'

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Impulse Control

Send in the Scouts

Muscles burning, breath straining, and feet beating the red dirt path along the tempo of “My Type” by Saint Motel in his ears, he leads Mikey through the nature preserve. The resilient little dog could keep up with him for longer distances each day, and seemed to love their runs as much as he does—three legs or not. He doesn’t use a leash. 99% of the time Mikey follows him or listens to his commands anyway. One time Mikey had taken off chasing a coyote and disappeared for fifteen minutes, which had scared the living shit out of him. Before his inner eye he’d seen himself finding Mikey torn to shreds. He’d been close to crying by the time Mikey came trotting back with a severely content expression. He’d been so furious (after the initial relief) that he roared Mikey’s name at the sight of him. Mikey had stuck his tail between his legs and flopped down belly up instantly. How do you punish a thing like that? He didn’t know. All the “dog manuals” said different things. He’d gone for military level obedience training on the way back. Going through commands like heel, sit, stay, come, lie down, stop, repeatedly, expecting instant obedience and getting it. Mikey still took off chasing animals, but after that instance he broke off the chase when Luci yelled “Stop”, so there is that.

The last sexting session he had with Sam had caused, well. A minor crisis, at least.

Roleplaying was nothing new to him. As far as he’s concerned, he plays a role every time he’s in court. Plus, what Sam had done was such a Charlie move that he hadn’t even questioned it at first. Charlie used to send him texts or emails when she was bored at work. She’d write out a scenario, assign him a role, give him a mission, and then they’d play. It could be anything from “You’re an Elvish noble conspiring against the king…” to “You work at the DMV…” to “You just arrived to the hospital and your water just broke…” (That last one had required some quick research and Thank God male pregnancies isn’t a thing!) He enjoyed roleplaying. It was an exercise in understanding other people, problem solving, and at the same time liberating—for a moment he didn’t need to be the bad guy everyone hated.

But with Sam he’d played himself, which meant to say, he wasn’t exactly playing.
The scenario Sam had given him, had allowed him to vent frustration in a way he didn’t even know he wanted. But it was also double edged. Because he didn’t want to hurt Sam. Not really. And yet he’d been turned on by it. The selfie Sam had sent him with the handprint on his face excited him on so many levels. It had taken him two hours of running to get the bad feeling out of his system. Sam putting him on the spot afterwards was a good thing (even if he’d whined about it), forcing him to pinpoint why he’d reacted the way he had. And Sam was right. It wasn’t the act of violence, or malicious intent, that got him going. On top of that he’d been following the instructions and rules that were given, so he had nothing to atone for. It had just taken him this long to conclude that.

The door handle feels slippery in his sweaty palm. “Hello?” It feels like his heart is trying to beat its way out of his chest when he swings the door open and peeks inside. There’s no answer.

Whoever leaves the door unlocked when he’s asleep or not at home?

There’s a meowing and suddenly his cat comes trotting from the bedroom. It gives Sam courage in his mad impulse. He opens the door all the way and steps inside, greeting Lucy with a smile. She strokes herself against his leg purring. He picks her up and cradles her to his chest as a safety blanket, scratching her behind an ear. “Hey baby. Is your other daddy home? I need to speak with him.”

“Mrrroow?”

“He said I was welcome any time I wanted. He said he wanted me to do what you did. I figured I’d take him up on that offer.” Talking to the cat helps. This is insanity. This is breaking and entering. (Or “entering” at least.) It’s also exhilarating. Frightening. Did he mention insane? It could end him up with a restraining order. But for some reason what they’d done tonight had given him a boost of courage. He could stay at home trying to figure out how he felt about all this (Yeah, right. Because that had worked so well up until now), or he could confront Luci and get some answers.

The house is quiet. It has an empty feel. He’d expected Lucifer’s dog to be the first to greet (or attack) him, but apart from Lucy there’s no one.

Maybe he’s out walking the dog?

He closes the door and looks around. The lights are out but morning light illuminates the house through the windows. “Wow. Luci’s gone far and beyond, trying to accommodate you, hasn’t he?” he tells the cat, who just purrs in response and strokes her head against his chin. Lucifer’s house has the same base layout as his own, but the wall between the living room and the hallway has been knocked down, leaving a larger living room area. There’s a cat highway along the walls. It looks more impressive when he can see all of it, compared to the glimpses in the video. All the furniture he can see are solid and simplistic.

Lucifer built them.

It hits home how well he’s gotten to know Lucifer through their texting. How unrestrained their conversations had been, solely because he didn’t know who he was talking to. He wonders what he’d done if he knew from the start and realises he’d never would had been so relaxed about talking to him if he had. Even before Jo came into the picture, Luci had already been someone he had an image of—the notorious Nick Alighieri, the Sucrocorp lawyer—someone he admired, and despised due to the client he’d chosen to defend. No wonder Luci didn’t reveal himself. Sam sure as hell wouldn’t have. He still felt like he’d been played. Like his privacy had been invaded. But there was that one text that made him act on this impulse to begin with. “I imagine it sometimes,
you know? You doing exactly what your cat did. Just showing up in my house, walk around a bit inspecting the interior critically without a word, then go grab a beer in my fridge and sit down in my couch.” So he was going to invade his privacy right back and see what happened.

I’m doing this. I’m friggin’ doing this! So, where to start?

His eyes fall on the bookcase behind Luci’s desk. He thinks of Dean’s assessment after seeing “the dating ad”.

It’s as good place as any, so he puts Lucy down and walks over there, the cat trailing after him curiously. Lucifer’s got all kinds of books. Classics, autobiographies, psychology and philosophy books, fairy tales. Every book Sam pulls out is oft-thumbed through, with notes in the margins, post it’s, and index markers. Even the fairy tales. (That’s all kinds of exciting, because the notes in those are analytical and makes the tales appear completely different. He wonders if Luci reads anything without analyzing, or if he re-reads after doing a “pleasure read”). He finds Machiavelli’s “The Prince” that Luci mentioned at Gabe’s. It’s read so many times it’s almost falling apart. A post it note fall out when he opens it. He picks it up and reads the quote on it.

“He who becomes a Prince through the favour of the people should always keep on good terms with them; which it is easy for him to do, since all they ask is not to be oppressed”

The last line is underlined and even bolded, making it clear what Lucifer thought of as important. Sam hadn’t heard that quote before and it triggers his curiosity. There’s a lot of notes in the margins of the book. Sam is tempted to just sit down and read it all in the wake of their discussion at Gabe’s. Instead he just reads another quote on a post it note.

“There is no other way to guard yourself against flattery than by making men understand that telling you the truth will not offend you.”

It seems like all the yellow post it’s are quotes that are important to Lucifer, and other colours holds commentary that didn’t fit in the margins. He starts reading a pink one and realises it’s more akin a diary note. “When the five boys cornered me and beat me down I felt…” He quickly closes the book, heart beating hard. Sure, he intended to invade privacy, but not like that. If he was going to read things that personal he wanted to know he was allowed to. He puts the book on the desk, where Lucy has gone to sit in a shoebox. (Seeing the shoebox makes Sam’s lips twitch in a smile.) Then he turns his attention to the rest of the house, before curiosity can get the better of him, tempting him to read the pink post its.

He hears the door open and close, then Lucifer’s voice calls out “Dean? Is that you?”

Oh my God! Oh my God! What was I thinking??? I should never have come! Why am I here? What am I DOING???

Sam gets up from where he’d been sitting on the edge of the bed, staring at the framed photo of himself, stunned.

Nearly panicking, Sam is rooted to the floor, sweat starting to pour, making him feel clammy all over. There’s no way Lucifer will be anything other than pissed.

The yipping Jack Russell that comes bounding into the bedroom breaks him out of it. At first he thinks he’s being attacked, but Mikey just jumps up and down on his leg, tail furiously wagging and tongue lolling in a big dog smile. He goes down on a knee and pets the dog, sputtering from the slobbery dog kisses he gets for the effort. “Oh wow. You’re not a guard dog, are you?” he asks chuckling, and stands up again.
“Wayne?” Luci calls out this time.

Bolstered by the warm greeting from the dog he only knew from pictures, he takes a few steadying breaths.

*Fake it til you make it. I can do this. Here we go…*

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Chapter End Notes
Solid Ground Beneath My Feet

Chapter Summary

Sam’s at Luci’s house. Facing him for the first time in far too long. Dying from nerves to boot.

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the cliffhanger. Sometimes you just got to do it... ;)

And thanks to Mizz_Kitty21 for betaing. All remaining mistakes are my own. ^^

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Solid Ground Beneath My Feet

Peace laurel

“Wayne?” Luci calls out this time.

Bolstered by the warm greeting from the dog he only knew from pictures, Sam takes a few steadying breaths.

*Fake it til you make it. I can do this. Here we go…*

Sam grabs the beer he’d taken from the fridge earlier and put on the nightstand, and steps out of the bedroom. He turns the corner of the hallway and leans casually (Yeah right!) against the doorframe to the living room. Lucifer is standing by the open door, cuddling Lucy in his arms and talking softly to her. He’s drenched in sweat, ruddy cheeked, and dressed in running clothes.

“Guess again, hotshot,” Sam says with a smirk, acting out all the casual confidence he can manage to fake while his heart is beating so fast it hurts, and his mind is screaming hysterically.

Lucifer’s head snaps up so fast it’s almost comical. His eyes go wide, his breath hitches audibly, and for a fraction of a moment he looks elated, before he just looks stunned.

Sam lifts his hand holding the beer. “Corona? Really, Luci? This is basically just coloured water,“ he says skeptically with a raised eyebrow, then takes a sip because his throat is dryer than the Sahara desert. He can feel his cheeks burning, belying his poor excuse of a calm demeanor.

Lucifer lets out a startled giddy giggle that’s sharply cut off. He puts down Lucy, runs a hand through his sweat soaked hair and looks at his feet, lips twitching like he’s trying to contain amusement. “I happen to like Corona. But just tell me what brand I should stock and I’ll see to that I have them too, should you be willing to venture back here in the future?” he says and looks up at Sam again, biting his lip, eyes still wide and kinda awed. Like he can’t really believe Sam is here. (To be fair—neither can Sam.) He looks open and vulnerable in a way Sam’s not used to
seeing him. There are no layers of defense in his expression or body language. Sam’s not sure if the hopeful lilt, making the last sentence a question, was on purpose. Somewhere on the floor between them Mikey and Lucy start playing with each other, yet none of them registers it.

Luci isn’t yelling at him to get out, or calling the cops, so that’s a good thing, further bolstering his courage. Though his heart keeps stuttering for other reasons than fear of reproach. The moment is tense, a bit awkward. He has the urge to just go to Luci and cling to him, which is idiotic, because they aren’t really at that level of physical closeness. They’ve made out once. Sam tries not to think about that, lest he become horny and forgets his sense. And he’s supposed to be angry at Luci, not act as if he’s about to break out in song just at the thrill of seeing him again. “Yeah… we’ll see about that,” he says dismissively and pushes himself off the doorframe. He sees Luci swallow, but Luci remains still and quiet, passively waiting for his next move. He bends down and looks at the photos on the wall. Trying to look nonchalant about being here. “Why were you expecting Dean to be here?” he asks in a fake-disinterested voice.

“He stops by randomly and checks up on me,” Lucifer says and shifts, rubbing his neck.

“And why would he do that?” Sam asks and straightens out, turning to face Luci head on. He puts one hand in his jeans pocket and takes another swig of his beer.

He had expected Luci to flinch at the mention of Dean, or look guilty, but he doesn’t. He remains looking open and hopeful. “We’re friends. I’ve been… less than well, since you and I last saw each other. He’s been duct taping me together, if you will. Preventing me from falling apart,” he answers Sam and toes off his shoes, then bends down to pull off his socks without looking away from Sam.

“How long have you known him?”

“We met in the park the same day you were at my office the first time. You know? When we met in the elevator? I was feeding birds and he sat down on a bench to watch. We started talking and somehow we drifted onto the topic of LARPing. He invited me to have a beer with him in the evening since Cas had a late shift that day.”

Sam remembers Dean calling him that night, telling him he’d met a guy that was totally Sam’s type, trying to coax him into joining them for a beer. He holds back an incredulous laugh. He’d declined partly because he was pining for Luci. A thought strikes him and he frowns. “He knew you were representing Jo’s accuser. Why would he invite you for a beer?”

Nick smiles in amusement. “I’m not in the habit of introducing myself in the least favorable way to random strangers, Sammy. Too many know that Alighieri is the asshole who defended Roman, and a lot of people are not beyond expressing what they think of that, using violence and threats. So when a friendly, handsome stranger inquired about my name, I told him it was ‘Nick’. When one of the beautiful people deems me worthy of attention, seemingly without wanting anything in return, I’m going to take advantage.”

Jealousy. Black, ugly jealousy. That’s what wells up within Sam upon hearing Luci refer to Dean as handsome and beautiful. Knowing Dean had gotten to spend time with Luci, when it had been denied to him. (Even if he had been the one to deny himself that.) “But you knew he was my brother. We share the same last name.”

“Oh, don't be ridiculous, darling. He just said his name was Dean. You really think I'd figure it out that easily? I didn't even know your full name by then.” Lucifer puts his hands behind his back and saunters towards him. “I didn't find out until later who he was. By then I already thought of him as a friend, and wanted to keep it that way as long as I could. I don’t know if you've figured it out, but I don't have that many friends.” He stops a few feet away from Sam, eyes roaming up and
down, drinking Sam in. “I thought he’d drop me like a hot potato the moment he found out. As it
turned out, the joke’s on me, because he figured it out the day you came with me to Sunshine Hill.
Funnier still, he managed to inquire about my intentions towards you, without me knowing he
knew. And I was angsting my ass off about him finding out.”

Dean is a dead man, when he sees him. A very dead man. Pain. Lots of pain is going to be
involved.

No wonder he hadn’t heard a peep from Dean since Jo’s visit. Sam would gladly spend hours
thinking up ways of punishing his brother if Lucifer hadn’t started to close in on him, backing him
up against the wall as Sam tries to keep some distance.

“When you mentioned you might have been out ‘cheating’ with my brother… were you?” Sam
asks, eyeing Luci up and down. He’s having huge problems keeping up the appearance of being
aloof when Luci’s this close. Luci’s skin is still ruddy and glistening with sweat after his run. The
black tee he’s wearing has darker patches of sweat on his chest and under his arms. Sweaty or not, Sam
likes his scent.

Luci digs his phone out of his pocket, fiddles with it and hands the phone to Sam. There’s the text
conversation with Dean from the night he and Sam had their fight about Lucifer’s offer. “He didn’t
give me much choice. He came here and I freaked the fuck out. I knew he'd know I was behind
the video the moment he stepped inside, so instead I met him outside and we went barhopping.
Drank about six or seven bars dry, came home early in the morning.” Luci says and pulls on his
lower lip, watching him intently. “As for cheating, you weren’t exactly giving me the time of day,
at the time. I was still convinced you hated me. I see no fault in spending some quality time in the
company of a friend while getting myself shitfaced, temporarily letting myself forget my miserable
lack of a lovelife, under those circumstances. Do you?”

“No,” Sam agrees, and scrolls through the full text history between Luci and Dean. It’s mostly bad
jokes traded between them. Nothing incriminating, just Dean showing off his tasteless politically
incorrect humour and Luci matching him stride for stride. He goes back to the list of all text
conversations, angling the phone to give Luci a chance to see, and stop him from reading anything
else. But Luci doesn’t. There aren’t that many names on the list. Bobby, Bela, Gabe, himself,
Raphael, Curtis, a couple of other unlisted numbers. A quick scan through reveals most to be
work related, dog related questions to Bobby, and Luci’s address sent to Gabe. He hands the
phone back. Their fingers touch when Luci takes it, making his stomach somersault.

“When did you find out who he was?”

“When I came home after I’d been out drinking with him the first time. Incidentally, that’s when I
found out you were Lucy’s owner. I had Bela dig up all she could find on you after meeting you
in the elevator. I read it when I came home. Since I was drunk and my head was full of you
already, seeing your name was Sam gave me the crazy notion to call the number on the note from
Lucy’s collar to check if you were the Sam from the note. And you were. Sorry about waking
you.”

Sam can’t keep a hold of the anger he’s been feeling about being played. That Luci had gathered
information about him doesn’t bother him. He gets it. The man is frequently subjected to threats,
and back then he too could have been one, as far as Luci knew. But he still wants answers. And
his friggin heart won’t stop hammering. He turns on his heel, walking towards the kitchen and
draining the rest of his beer as he goes. “I don’t remember that. But why didn’t you tell me who
you were?”

“Don’t pretend you’re stupid, jackass. By that time you had called me Satan, followed me on my
morning run for no discernable reason, trashed my car, and given me a scolding. As far as I knew
you hated me. To me, you’re one of the most beautiful, admirable, valiant, and inspiring human beings I’d ever had the honor of laying my eyes on,” Luci answers, trailing after him. Sam throws the bottle away in the garbage can and takes another beer from the fridge. When he turns back towards the doorway, Luci’s standing there, looking absolutely delighted at Sam’s show of being at home, when in reality Sam’s just trying to act arrogant not to lose confidence. But the way Luci’s looking at him makes all the butterflies go bananas in his belly again. He jumps up to sit on the kitchen counter, dangling his legs, while Luci goes on talking. “I figured it’d be a good way to get to talk to you without the stigma of my name and my public persona. Show you who I am and get to know you. By the time you turned down my request for a date, it was the only way I could continue talking to you. I didn’t want to lose that too.”

It makes sense. And as far as Sam can see, Luci answers honestly and without hesitation, seeming to have nothing to hide. ”Do you still think I’m all those things?”

Luci scrunches up his face in confusion. “Why wouldn’t I?”

Sam shifts, uncaps the beer and picks at the label, looking away from Luci. “After tonight, I mean. What we did…” And yep. There he goes again, feeling his stupid cheeks heat up.

“You mean, as in two consenting adults getting off together, sharing a common fantasy with pre-agreed upon rules, where both were in control and could end it with one word at any time?” Luci says dryly, gesturing with his hand back and forth. “If that was what you meant, then yes.”

Sam’s cheeks are burning with embarrassment. He looks up. Luci may sound blasé about it, but he too is blushing. Sam chuckles. “When you put it like that…”

Luci looks away, draws breath as if to say something, hesitates, then lets the breath out again. He looks up, steels himself and walks up to Sam, putting a hand on either side of Sam on the edge of the counter. “Sam… I need to make something clear. What we did tonight… It would never happen for real. The same scenario would play out totally different if you were to leave me, assuming you’d given me a chance to be with you to begin with. I might yell at you, I might even go so far as desperately grabbing your wrist, but I would never force you to stay, or hit you. Unless of course you attacked me and I’m forced to use self-defense, and even then my main tactic is to restrain, not harm. You’d be safe,” he says, serious and sincere. “I can’t say the same for my furniture or the world at large after you’ve left though,” he adds with a wry smile.

“Seeing my red cheek turned you on though,” Sam challenges. Nevermind that it turned Sam on that it excited Lucifer. He still needs to clear his mind about this. Luci’s scent clogs his nostrils. The sharp sting of fresh sweat reminds him of the outdoor gym, the hand on each side of him of their make out session. It’s heady. He loves the way Lucifer smells. He wants to friggin rub himself in that smell. Taste it. Screw talking. Luci keeps making things so easy, skipping over steps Sam’s used to.

“It did. And that freaked me out for awhile afterwards. Thanks for talking me through it. It was partly the trust you bestowed on me, to be allowed to do that, even by proxy. But most of all it was the mark itself, not the act of violence, that got me. I’d be equally turned on if you wore my ring, or a sign with the print belongs to Lucifer on it.” Lucifer had been leaning closer as he spoke. His hands come up to rest on Sam’s thighs, bleeding warmth through his jeans. Slowly, slowly he moves his hands upward, watching Sam intently to gauge his reaction. If it had been tense between them before, now the air was buzzing with electricity.

Sam puts his beer down and digs in his pocket. “You mean something…” He had followed yet another impulse before he left home, added a little good luck charm to his getup. By then he hadn’t really been sure he’d be brave enough to actually go over here. With a lopsided smirk he pulls his keychain out of the pocket and holds it up for Luci to see. “...like this?” It’s embarrassing
Lucifer’s eyes go round when they fall on the golden name tag with “Lucifer” carved on it. It’s one of those Luci consistently had put on Lucy to show there was a new message in the tube. Luci lets out a disbelieving, gratified little sound. The hands on Sam’s thighs tighten their grip and dig in possessively, causing a thrill inside of Sam. Luci looks back at him, eyes burning with intensity. “Yes,” he answers, voice as rough as Sam’s had been. He starts to lean in, wetting his lips, eyes intent on Sam’s mouth.

“You’re being presumptuous,” Sam tells him, heart beating furiously, fighting the urge to just lean down and meet him in a kiss, to spread his legs wider to give the other man more space, to tug him in and... he wants answers first, he reminds himself. By now he isn’t really sure to what questions, or why it can’t wait. Maybe it’s just that he needs to feel he has control when it’s been out of his hands for so long.

Luci halts his movement, lips twitching and mischief in his eyes. “I’m being opportunistic,” he states and moves forward again.

“Who’s Wayne?” Sam asks and gets a finger between their lips just before Luci’s about to kiss him. Luci doesn’t retreat and Sam doesn’t want him too either.

“My neighbour,” Luci says, lips moving against the finger. Their breaths mingle and Sam feels dizzy with it.

“Is he hot?”

Luci bends down his head, shoulders shaking in silent laughter. He looks up again, amusement and an edge of mockery in his features. “Why, Sammy, you’re being jealous,” he teases. Sam scoffs and leans back out of reach for a kiss. “He might be,” Luci adds thoughtfully. “If you’re into 80 year olds.”

“I’m not jealous.” (Okay, so maybe he is.) “I’m just trying to figure out why you’d think he’d be here, and why you leave your door unlocked when you’re out. I’ve been here for a good two hours at least.” He rests one arm on Lucifer’s shoulder to make sure the other man doesn’t back away, and grabs his beer with the other hand still holding the keychain. He’s stalling this on purpose, despite their proximity, the raving butterflies in his stomach, and the exhilarated thrills he gets from every point of contact. If Lucifer is disappointed at being foiled in his advances, he doesn’t show it. He looks happy just to be standing between the V of Sam’s legs, with his hands on Sam’s thighs. It makes it hard to not just let the lizard brain take over.

“I didn’t think he’d be here, but somebody was, judging by the lamps being on and the book on my desk. If it had been Dean he would have hollered an answer. So Wayne was as good a guess as any. As for why the door was unlocked, the answer should be obvious,” Luci answers and tilts his head like he’s puzzled how anyone can’t understand why the door was unlocked.

“Yeah. No. It isn’t,” Sam answers skeptically and takes a sip on the beer. Luci tracks the nametag on the keychain with his eyes when he tips the bottle back to drink. For a moment there’s a flicker of avarice in his eyes. It has Sam’s belly doing more excited flip flops. ‘I’ll settle for any crumbs you deign to give me, but I want to own you.’ And why is that so hot?

I wonder how he’d react if I wore it on a collar around my neck?

Sam quickly pushes that thought away. They’re not there yet. They’re not there yet, because Sam’s not there yet. They’re not even dating. But truth be told, unless Lucifer says something infinitely stupid, they will be. Seriously. The guy walked into his own house to find Sam loitering
about and acting like a spoiled brat, and seemed for all the world like it’s the best thing that could happen. Sam’s relationship status is no longer ‘single’ no matter what it says on his Facebook. Sam’s a one-person-at-a-time kind of guy. (Hence the feeling of being a cheater when he juggled “Mystery Man” and Luci all at once.) And since Luci’s obviously still interested, Sam can’t see any reason they shouldn’t start dating for real.

“If you invite someone special to your home, you can’t go about locking him out, now can you?” Luci says and pokes him in the chest twice.

Sam lets out an incredulous laugh. “Dude! You’ve got people sending you death threats, and you still leave your door unlocked? And you could be robbed too, aside from that.”

Luci grins, shrugs, and leans his head against Sam’s chest like he had the right to, twisting his head so he can peer up at Sam, still grinning. He winds his arms around Sam’s torso loosely. “The rewards are greater than the risks, it seems.”

As he’s placed right now, Luci must be able to hear Sam’s heart jackhammering. Sam grins right back at him, arm still loosely draped around his shoulder. The T-shirt is wet and Sam just can’t find it disgusting, even if he tried. The moment drags on. Sam isn’t even really aware of time ticking while they’re just staring stupidly at each other. Not until there’s a crash from the living room, making Sam jerk and Mikey start barking.

“Your cat is a menace,” Luci states dryly, without so much as a flinch at the sudden noise.

“So are you. Now go take a shower, and I’ll take care of her mess.” Not that he wants Lucifer to shower. He just needs some space to let his thoughts catch up. He had questions, dammit. Lots of them. His brain just seemed to be unwilling to function as it should.

Luci makes a little delighted noise in the back of his throat. “Will you be here when I get back?”

“Probably. Depends on how long you’re away.”

“Record speed shower it is then,” Luci jests and winks, before untangling himself and stepping away. “There’s booze in the cupboard above the fridge if you tire of drinking coloured water,” he adds over his shoulder and all but skips out of the kitchen.

Sam takes a few deep breaths to steady himself. He feels giddy and exhilarated. Are things really supposed to be this easy? This is not how you get together with someone. You flirt, you go on dates, make out on doorsteps. Then you have sex and introduce your intended partner to your friends and family. You don’t have highly fetishized sex via texts, (and dates at luxury restaurants too, come to think of it) then wander into the guy’s house and make yourself at home. You don’t share a cat before you even know each others name, and you don’t indulge in friggin frottage against a car in broad daylight. And judging by what Luci just told him, Dean had all but adopted him into the family already. Dean wouldn’t have dropped by to check up on Luci otherwise.

It feels like he’d been given all the pieces to a puzzle but instead of building it methodically—all the corner and edges first—he’d started building pieces together haphazardly with no order in mind. It’s a mess at the same time as it isn’t. He jumps down from the counter and walks out of the kitchen when he hears the shower start up. Luci hasn’t even closed the door fully and he can hear Luci shamelessly sing an old Frankie Valli song under the spray.

“You’re just too good to be true… Can’t take my eyes off of you… You feel like heaven to touch… I wanna hold you so much…”

Sam lets out a startled laugh at the carefree singing. Judging by what Luci just said about locking
doors, the partway open bathroom door is probably an invitation. Whatever words you can use to describe the infamous lawyer—“shy” isn’t one of them.

Then his eyes fall on Mikey and Lucy. Lucy’s sitting on the window sill. A flower pot lies on the floor, unbroken, but the dirt and plant has spilled out of it. Mikey—thankfully no longer barking—jumps up and down trying to reach Lucy while she looks at him and slowly pushes at the other flower pot on the sill, intent on knocking it down too. It elicits another laughter from him. He can’t believe she does it to the dog too. “Lucy, no,” he says, grinning, and strides across the living room to sweep her up before she can do more damage. He puts her down on the couch, where she gives him a disdainful look, and walks off with her tail held high like a disgruntled queen. He crouches down and shoves dirt and plant back in the pot while Mikey stands close by and watches what he’s doing. The dog scampers off and comes back with a ball that he drops on the floor beside Sam. “Not now, Mikey,” he tells the dog. Mikey scampers off again just to come back with a chew toy, dumping it beside the ball. He looks expectantly at Sam and makes a little play bow.

Sam’s happy. He’s so friggin happy right now it’s ridiculous. It just hits him right there. On his knees in a strange house, cleaning up after his cat, while a three-legged dog tries to coax him to play with it, and his hopefully-soon-to-be-boyfriend sings in the shower.

He’s still nervous and a bit confused in the wake of the emotional turmoil of these last couple of weeks. He’s tired after not getting enough sleep for… well. Forever. He feels a bit off balanced, and a bit like Luci’s sitting with all the cards in his hand while Sam’s just been informed what game they are playing to begin with. He wants to feel like they’re a bit more on equal grounds. He needs them to be. And maybe that’s why he’s stalling? He’s gotten answers to the most urgent questions. As nice as it is to let Luci sweep him off his feet like a tidal wave, and just go with it—he needs some sense of footing, of normalcy. Rushing in blindly is a Dean kind of move, not a Sam-like thing to do. So he’ll cut the strings and dance to his own tune, and see what happens.

“You’re still here.” Luci says it like it surprises him, and he looks like it too. He’s dressed in scruffy jeans and the military green tee he wore the first time Sam saw him.

“Shouldn’t I be?” Sam says quirking his lip in a lopsided smirk while raising an eyebrow. He’s trying to emulate Luci’s make-no-excuses-for-oneself-confidence. He lies on the couch with Mikey beside him. The dog has rolled over on his back and looks all blissed out by the belly rub he’s been getting.

“Of course you should be. I just wasn’t sure if you knew that too,” Luci says with a smirk of his own, posture and expression shifting to superciliousness, just to flow into one of playful mischief right after.

Sam laughs and sits up. He takes a deep breath. “Look. Lucifer. I like you. A lot, actually. But I’ve got to be honest with you. This is going a bit too fast for me. With all that has happened, with Jo, and the texting. It’s just… it’s a bit too much to swallow all in one bite, you know?”

Lucifer shifts on his feet. His expression doesn’t give much away, but Sam sees him swallow, and there’s some colour raising on his cheeks. “Okay…”

“I need some time to wrap my head around things. Make what’s happened between me and you in real life, sink in with what we’ve said, and done, through texts.”

Luci’s body language doesn’t shift much, but Sam can feel him becoming guarded. The man has an aura, a presence, that fills up a room and demands attention. And suddenly it’s gone. Just like when Gabe had mentioned Venus Rising, only now Luci’s body language isn’t shutting down,
just the capital P presence. “I suppose I can understand that.”

“I want us to slow it down just a bit, until I’ve caught up. If that’s okay with you? I mean. I’m… I’m kinda tempted to say ’screw it all’ and jump into bed with you straight away. But that’s not really me, you know?”

Lucifer crosses his arms over his chest and lifts a hand to bite on his index finger. “I see. Can I at least take you on a date?”

“No.”

There’s a flicker of absolute hurt in Luci’s face before the mask of I-don’t-care-either-way slides in place. And maybe it isn’t so odd, as Sam has rejected him repeatedly already, but that’s not at all what Sam had in mind.

Sam gets off the couch and walks up to Lucifer, smiling, heart beating faster the closer he gets. “So get this. You’ve already taken me on two dates, right? That fancy restaurant, and Gabe’s.” He stops in front of Luci, looking earnest.

“Ri-ight,” Luci answers suspiciously and tilts his head, squinting a little.

“I figured it’s my turn to return the favour,” Sam says and raises his eyebrows in question. He’s nervous. It’s ridiculous. It should be a done deal, why be nervous?

Luci frowns. “You want to take me out for a date?” The notion seems foreign to Luci.

Sam chuckles. “Yeah. If that’s alright with you.”

Luci blinks at him, face blank for a moment. Then a giddy giggle blurbs out of his mouth, swiftly cut off, but his lips keeps twitching and his eyes practically glows excitedly. “Yes. That’s alright with me, darlin’. How about right now?”

“Now would be perfect. I just need to nip back home to get my car and wallet.”

“What should I wear? Do I need to change?”

Sam grins. “No. That’s perfect. You’re perfect the way you are,” he says, revelling in how that statement makes Luci blush and look down on his feet. “I’ll be back in twenty minutes to pick you up, okay?”

“I’ll be good to go.”

“Great!” Sam beams at him, then turns to walk towards the door. At the door he stops and looks back. “I’ll be right back,” he says, giving Luci a last smile, then he hurries out before he can change his mind on taking it slow.

Supposedly, he jogs the short way home. To him it feels like he’s floating. He finds himself singing under his breath as he goes. “At long last love has arrived… And I thank God I’m alive… You’re just too good to be true… Can’t take my eyes off of you…”

Chapter End Notes
Oh, btw, the link to the spotify playlist for this fic can be found here.
Luci’s pulse is jackhammering as fast as it had on his run, had been, since Sam stepped into view. For a moment he wondered if he’d lost his mind and started to hallucinate, but no. Sam was really there. In his house. Drinking his beer. Not telling him to go to hell. Not yelling angrily at him or saying spiteful things, just asking very valid questions. And wearing a token with his name on it! (He can’t dwell on that, because anytime he does that greedy burn flares hot just below his ribcage.) Remembering Sam’s initial reaction to learning his name, that was an ultimate testimony of how much Sam’s thoughts of him has changed.

He’s fucking high on the feelings that had caused.

For a moment after his shower, when Sam told him he needed time, his stomach had plummeted, a ball of icy worry forming in it. And when Sam said “no” to his request to take him out for a date… he’d been sure that he’d misread everything, and this was just a big final “It’s-not-you-it’s-me”-rejection. The ground dropped out beneath his feet at that very moment.

Goes to show how little he knows. So now, after the initial fistpump and dizzy-giddy happy dance in the wake of Sam leaving, he was freaking. the fuck. out.

He takes his phone and hits speed dial, the call going straight to voicemail as usual. “C! I need you! I’m freaking out and need advice. Come hoooooome!” Then he hangs up and calls Dean. There’s no answer, so he hangs up. Time’s ticking and he’s getting really worked up. He puts on his shoes, pockets his wallet. “Mikey. Here, boy. We’re going to uncle Wayne,” he calls out when he opens the door. Mikey comes running as soon as Wayne is mentioned. He shoots out of the door and to the hedge between their yards, then wiggles underneath it while Luci locks his door. By the time he’s rounded his yard and entered Wayne’s, Mikey’s already lying outside Wayne’s door waiting.

Luci knocks on his neighbour’s door. It doesn’t take long before the old man opens and goes down on a knee to greet Mikey.

“Wayne. Sam came here. He asked me out for a date. Can you take Mikey?” Luci asks, fidgeting nervously and shifting back and forth on his feet.

Wayne chuckles. “Of course. I enjoy the company of this little whirlwind.” He eyes Luci up and down, taking in his fidgety state. “Are you okay? I thought this is what you wanted?”

“Yes, well. This is new to me. I’ve never… This is the first time, you know?”
Wayne rises to his feet with a bemused frown while Mikey trots inside. “This can’t be the first time you’ve been on a date?”

“No. Of course not, jackass,” Luci says with impatient annoyance. “I’ve dated. I’ve dated a lot. I’ve just always been the dater, not the datee. I don’t know what rules apply, what protocol to follow. Usually people make it clear to me they’re interested in being courted, so I court them. This… this is unfamiliar grounds.”

Wayne fucking laughs at him (asshole) and shakes his head. “You’re a strange man, Lucifer. Just let the lucky man do his thing. I’m sure you’ll figure it out. Just be yourself.”

Luci rolls his eyes. He feels like he’s about to start hyperventilating any minute. “Not helping, Wayne.”

Sam’s car turn around the corner of their street. Luci’s skin feels too tight.

Thirty six years old, and never been taken on a date before. It’s pathetic. I’m pathetic. I’d fucking laugh at myself if I didn’t feel like throwing up with nerves. Charlie would tease the living shit out of me.

“I would tease the living shit out of me.”

“Just go. A sweet guy like you will do fine,” Wayne says with a chuckle and does a shooing motion with his hand as Sam rolls up to the curb by Luci’s house.

Luci waves to get his attention and Sam drives forward to stop outside Wayne’s instead. “I’m not sweet,” Luci mutters and gives Wayne a little goodbye wave before sauntering towards Sam’s car. Sam gets out and comes around the car. He gives Luci a dimpled smile and opens the passenger side door for him.

It’s risible how that little act makes Luci feel like doing backflips to match the stupid exhilarated flux in his belly. It was years ago since he last did backflips. He wonders if he still can. He stops himself from trying and probably making a fool of himself in front of Sam. Instead he smiles back at Sam and gets into the car.

He wonders if he’s ever made anyone feel like this? Like nervous elated giggles were pressed against the roof of their mouth, threatening to spring free at any moment for the tiniest reason.

“You young ’uns have fun,” Wayne calls to them before he goes inside and Sam shuts the car door.

There’s some real crappy music playing in the car, proving that Sam doesn’t share his brother’s excellent taste in music. The interior smells of wunderbaum and Sam. There’s a plastic bag with some trash in it by the footwell. It’s clean, if you don’t count the shit emanating from the ipod dock. Luci fastens his seatbelt and rests his hands on his knees, lest he starts fidgeting.

Sam goes around the front of the car and comes inside, giving him another smile. “So that’s Wayne, huh?” he asks and starts the car, driving off.

“Yes. He watches Mikey for me. As you saw, he’s only ‘hot’ if you meant it in the left-out-in-the-sun-to-dry-too-long way. A bit too old to fall into the DILF category.”

Sam chuckles. “We have a curfew? I mean, do you have a time when you have to pick up Mikey?”

Luci shakes his head and rests his elbow on the window sill, twisting his body so he’s looking at Sam. He’s dressed in jeans and a grey loose fitting, V-necked, longsleeved tee with its sleeves pulled up to his elbows. The fabric drapes his shoulders and chest in a very flattering way. “No.
I’m all yours for as long as you wish. Where are we going?”

“You’ll see. Look. I can’t take you to a fancy restaurant. Like you said, we’re in different income brackets,” Sam says, sounding apologetic. Like Luci cared. He’s just awed that Sam wanted to take him anywhere to begin with.

“It’s not your monetary assets I’m interested in, Samwise, it’s your company,” Luci answers dryly. “And is this what your brain interprets as music?” he says, slightly annoyed, gesturing at the ipod dock. The music grates on his already frayed nerves.

Sam chuckles again, drums his fingers against the steering wheel, giving small tells that he’s nervous too. “Yeah. It’s Jason Manns. I like him. He’s good.” He shuts the music off either way.

“Lets agree to disagree. And if you ever get the idea of making me a mixtape - don’t.” Sam actually laughs—a precious gift that sizzles every cell in Luci’s body—and throws him a highly amused glance. “Noted. Hey, have you had breakfast yet? I forgot to ask.”

“No.”

“Good. We’re almost there.” Sam switches on the blinkers and turns onto the parking lot by the docks. He parks the car and gets out, walking around to open the door for Luci.

“I can open a car door by myself, you know?” Luci says, but his lips keep twitching, threatening to plaster a big dorky grin on his face. Nevermind that he’d done the same if he’d been the one taking out Sam.

Apparently, Sam sees beyond the defensive thorns he puts out in wake of the unfamiliar. “I know,” he answers and winks at Luci. He goes around to the trunk and takes out two fold out chairs and a coolbox. “Help me carry these?” he holds out the chairs to Luci who gratefully takes them—happy to have a task to perform. He’s used to make things happen, even when he hasn’t got a clue as to what he’s doing. But since Sam specifically asked him for space, he feels more lost than ever.

They walk to the dock, turn onto the pier and follow it to the end, where Sam sets up the folding chairs and opens the coolbox. “It’s not a luxury restaurant, but I like this. Used to come here all the time to clear my mind,” Sam says with a smile, and bids Luci to sit. “I know many prefer the beach, but I like watching the ships roll by, not having sticky kids trip over me, and have my view disrupted by, um, underdressed, overcooked... people…” He flustered around the last sentence, like he tries to find a political correct way to say fat, ugly, old people, without causing insult. Luci sniggers and drops into a folding chair, beginning to relax now that he knew what they were doing at least.

“I can see the appeal. Charlie and I used to buy ice cream at Dale’s, and go sit on the docks over there to eat them.” He points further down the docks, not far from the industrial harbour.

Sam hands him a soda and takes one for himself. A seagull lands a couple of feet away from them, studying them with jerky head movements. “Luci, I want to thank you for letting me do this. I was kind of a jerk to you when we met, and I want to make it up to you.”

“No need. I’ve already forgiven you. How could I not, when you flash me those dimples?” Luci answers and winks.

He gets one of those aforementioned dimpled smiles as a reward, paired with a handshake and a blush. “Maybe you have, but I haven’t.” He hands Luci a BLT—the kind sold in the KwikMart near their neighbourhood—as soon as it’s in Luci’s hands, the gull takes wing and lands on Luci’s
shoulder, flapping its wings for balance. Sam leans back. “Whoa. What the—?”

Luci waves the gull away with a disgruntled face, making it take flight. “No. You want some, you take it midair. That’s the deal. I don’t want one of you biting me again,” he tells the gull and tears a piece of the sandwich off, throwing it up in the air where the gull catches it and flies off. Sam watches the whole exchange with wide-eyed wonder, very much like Dean had.

“I saw a pic of you on the Venus Rising website, where you had a magpie sitting by your hand. How do you get them to get so close?” Sam asks bemusedly and takes a bite of his own sandwich, watching Luci curiously.

Luci shrugs. “Animals have always come to me for some reason. They like me. I like them too, but don’t tell them that or they may start getting ideas.” He gives Sam a conspiratorial smile and digs into the BLT before the gull comes back. He’s secretly pleased with how impressed Sam looks. He covers his mouth with a hand and goes on talking before Sam has a chance to. “It’s a bit of a hassle. Sometimes they bite, or crap on you. But all in all, I can put up with a little shit on my shirt in return for their natural affection.” He swallows the piece of sandwich in his mouth and gives Sam a meaningful look. “With other words, Ganymedes, forget about your past transgressions towards me.”

And there it is again—that mind blowing smile, all for him, possibly the most addictive thing he’s ever come across. Sam blushes and looks down on his lap. A soft warm breeze ruffles his hair. It looks so soft and he wants to touch it. He would, but Sam had asked for space, so he doesn’t.

“You’ve tried drugs?” Sam asks, turning his head to look at him with astonishment.

Luci’s lips twitch in amusement. “By the surprise you display, I take it your college experience was vastly different from mine.”

“Yeah, okay. Look, I get it.” Sam looks up at him again, eyes warm. “But all this? It isn’t easy for me. It kinda scares me. I told you what happened to my exes, right?” Luci hums an affirmative. “And it isn’t easy to let go of the fear that somehow, it’s my fault that anyone I fall for dies.” Sam turns his head to look out over the water, the smile melting off his face. “I know that logically, it can’t be my fault, but…”

“—but emotions aren’t ruled by logic,” Luci butts in, and throws another piece of bread in the air when the gull comes back. “Don’t think you’re the only one scared of getting hurt. I decided I wanted to pursue your affections, with full certainty it was going to hurt me. A lot. Again, it comes down to reward versus risks. I’m not going to beat around the bush about it, Sam. I’m head over heels for you. Making you smile gets me higher than any drugs I’ve ever tried. Compared to that, the likely heartbreak involved is well worth it.”

“You’ve tried drugs?” Sam asks, turning his head to look at him with astonishment.

Smirking, Luci leans over the armrest of the folding chair, making a come-hither gesture to make Sam do the same. Sam does, and when their faces are inches apart Luci edges even closer. “That, dear Sam, is because I’m—” he pauses to lick his lips and dart a look at Sam’s lips to declare intent, posing an unspoken question. It doesn’t pass him by how Sam’s breath speeds up and his lips part slightly, cheeks tinting pink. Sam blushes so easily. (Luci wonders if that’s for him alone too.) Instead of leaning away or putting up a hand in between as he’d done in the kitchen, Sam wets his lips in response to Luci’s signals. “—exceptional,” he ends the sentence and closes the distance between their lips.

It’s fucking laughable how such a simple thing as a kiss can fry next to every braincell. A simple press of lips, and the tip of Sam’s tongue asking to take it further, and just like that Luci’s insides
are throwing a dance party, putting the carnival in Rio de Janeiro to shame. But Sam said to take it slow. (Thankfully, judging by this he didn’t mean torturously slow.) So after a minute Luci breaks the kiss and leans back. They’re both breathing rougher than a kiss merits, and Sam looks deliciously debauched, pupils blown and lips spit slicked.

“Tell me about Sarah. She left you, so obviously she was an airhead, but how did you get together?” Luci asks, and opens his soda, trying to de-scramble his wits and stop from breaking out in a fit of exhilarated giggles again.

Sam, shakes his head, clawing himself from the dazed state he’s in. A quick glance proves his jeans are straining to contain a bulge, which almost sends Luci reeling again. He pretends he doesn’t notice. Taking it slow is the mission.

“Um,... right. Sarah,” Sam says, collecting himself somewhat. “Dean met her when there was a false fire alarm at the art gallery up at Sterling boulevard. He thought she seemed like my type and nagged at me until I agreed to meet her…”

This time when they talk, they talk about personal things. Not about politics or ideals. Luci tells Sam about his friendship with Charlie, about the clusterfuck of a romance he had with Lilith, and about his love for gardening and woodworking. Sam tells him about the upbringing he had, after he got kicked out by their dad. How they lived in the Impala that Dean stole from their dad when he ran away to find Sam, how they moved from town to town, Dean forging their dad’s signature and impersonated him through phone calls, to make sure Sam could attend school and so that CPS wouldn’t get wind of them living rough and try separating them. He talks about how they lived all over, in shitty motels or squatting in abandoned houses. About how Dean was out more often than not, always managing to make sure they had food and clothing, but sometimes could come home in the middle of the night with blood on his knuckles or clothes and tell Sam it was time to skip town.

They take a stroll down the docks, buy ice cream, (That Sam pays for. It doesn’t sit well with Luci, knowing how bad Sam’s financial situation is. But Wayne had said to let the ‘lucky man’ do his thing, so Luci bites his tongue.) and walk to the park where they sit down on a bench. Sam has a laughing fit at the sparrow that randomly lands on Luci’s head just as Luci’s about to lean in and steal another kiss. Apparently Sam finds the string of profanity that spills out of Luci’s mouth at being cockblocked by a sparrow equally hilarious as the sparrow itself. But getting that unrestrained laughter out of Sam makes it worth it. On the walk back to the car Sam shyly brushes Luci’s hand with his fingers, lifting an eyebrow in question from under his bangs. It’s so silly that Sam’s shy about taking Luci’s hand, that Luci has to hold back the impulse to laugh at him. At the same time it thrills him that Sam wants to hold hands. Luci entwines their fingers like it’s the most natural thing in the world.

In the car driving back home Luci watches Sam thoughtfully. “Sam, can I ask you a question?”

“Sure.” Sam’s relaxed, watching the road with a soft smile playing on his lips.

“I’ve been ruminating about one of the texts you sent tonight…”

Sam’s gaze flick to him for a beat, then back to the road. There’s a slight tensing of his facial muscles and shoulders. “Uhuh?”

“You wrote, and I quote you now, ‘You play along or you and me end right now. Unless I write "STOP" you don't ask me for consent. If it's too much for you, you write "STOP" and I'll respect that.’ Those were your exact words.”

“Yeah…?” Sam fidgets a bit nervously, getting uncomfortable. It can’t be helped. Luci’s needs to
know this.

“My question for you is, if I had safe-worded, would I have lost any chance to date you, by doing so?”

Sam frowns, still looking at the road. “Of course not. Why’d you—” his mouth snaps shut and his eyes go wide. You can see when it hits home. “Oh my god.” Sam pales, looking absolutely horrified, and slaps a hand over his mouth. He drives to the curb and parks the car, then turns towards Luci, but shying away at the same time, pressing his back against the door. “That’s, that’s not how I meant it. Oh, god. I’m so sorry. Didn’t you want to…? Did I force you…?” He’s on the verge of hyperventilating, eyes so full of guilt it almost makes Luci nauseous.

Fuck taking it slow, and fuck giving him space. Luci unclasps his safety belt and scoots as close as the seat will allow him, puts a hand on Sam’s thigh and raises the other to card soothingly through Sam’s hair while smiling reassuringly. “Hey, hey. It’s okay. You didn’t force me into doing something I didn’t want to do. In fact, it was intoxicatingly liberating, and I would have upped the aggression level further without any hesitation, had you indicated that you wished me to do so,” he says, using a soft voice, and curves his shoulders to box Sam in, wanting to make sure Sam’s only focused on him and the soothing aura he tries to project. “Had it become too much for me I would have said ‘stop’ and hoped for the best, despite the ambiguous wording in your text.” He strokes his thumb back and forth on Sam’s thigh, keeping his facial expression soft and friendly, drawing from his ability to appear calm even when he’s not. And inside he isn’t calm at all. Not when Sam looks like a wounded animal.

Christ! He’s got puppy eyes to rival Mikey’s.

“I’m so sorry. Had you played along and said stop, I’d never cut you off because of it. I meant if you didn’t play along at all and I…” Sam swallows and looks down on his lap, putting his hand on top of Luci’s. “Okay so get this. I had figured out who you were already, but you didn’t know that, right?” he looks up at Luci for confirmation. Luci shakes his head and caresses his cheekbone under his eye with a thumb. Sam’s blushing now—from shame—cheek hot under Luci’s finger. “I was angry and confused, and I was thinking about us sexting before, and about us, um,... kissing…” he looks down again with another dry swallow. “That got me horny, and I decided to take a chance. I figured that if you rejected me right off the bat when you knew what I wanted, apart from dying from mortification, I could, um… this is stupid. But I thought, I could end it with mystery man, that’s what I called you, and, and… I could still have a chance with you, you know? All I had to do would be to avoid your house, and we could pretend it never happened without any of us losing face.” Sam looks up at him again pleadingly.

Luci chuckles and kisses his forehead. “Mmh. There are some major holes in that logic, but I see what you’re getting at.”

Sam gives him a weak smile but relaxes a couple of notches. “Yeah, I realise that. But at the time I hadn’t slept much and was in a state of emotional turmoil. I just wanted… look. I’m really ashamed of having that fantasy. I’ve never told anyone about it. Never dared. But we edged into it the first time we…” Sam takes a deep breath to steady himself. “I had no idea what I was doing. I didn’t even think about how it could be read, since I knew I would never hold it against someone if they didn’t want to do something that made them uncomfortable sexually.”

“You don’t have to be ashamed. There’s a world of difference between fantasising, and actually wanting to do something in real life. And if you want to live out a fantasy, there’s still a difference between wanting to do it within a controlled, safe framework, where everyone involved is in on it, and wanting it for real. The whole BDSM community is built on that.”

“I’m beginning to get that. But what we did isn’t exactly the same as what a bunch of people
spanking each other, dressed in leather, get up to,” Sam says skeptically. He’s relaxed again, leaning his cheek into Luci’s hand, and lacing his finger in with Luci’s other hand.

Luci chuckles, the internal knots loosening in response to Sam’s relaxation. “Darlin’, it has everything to do with what we did. BDSM has nothing to do with leather and paddles, and everything to do with trust, and what goes on in your cantaloupe,” he says and taps a finger against Sam’s temple. “I’ll tell you all about it at some point, should you wish to know more.”

“You’re into that? BDSM, I mean. You got a lot of experience with it?” Sam asks, curious now.

As always when talking about his personal sexlife, Luci plays it off as if he’s blasé about it. He can’t stop his cheeks from feeling warm, but he can keep control of his exterior. He cards through the silky strands of Sam’s hair, awed at the fact that he gets to do this—that Sam not only lets him, but seems to want him to. Not faking it to get access to his wallet. “I’ve got some experience. Charlie and I, we co-own my house. And we live together when she’s not backpacking across the world. One day I came home early from a business trip to find a naked girl tied up on the living room floor.” Luci grins. “After the first confused and terribly awkward minutes, it turned out Charlie’s girlfriend was very into BDSM and they’d scene when I was out of town. Once it was revealed they’d scene with me at home too, so during weekends I got to interact and handle Charlie’s… pet. Albeit not sexually.”

Sam makes a noise that might pass for a disbelieving little laugh. His expression is filled with bemused wonder. “I thought BDSM was about sex?”

Luci shakes his head. “Not necessarily. And not solely. Charlie’s pet liked to give up her agency, and put all the responsibility for her care and choices in somebody else’s hands. She worked as an executive at a large company, making decisions daily, that influenced the lives of hundreds of employees. For her it was liberating not to have any responsibility at all. The sexual gratification she got with Charlie was just a plus to her.”

“Huh. Is that your only experience with it?”

“No. I’ve been fortunate to get to join another couple once, where one of the men is a dom, and the other is a sub. It required some discussion beforehand, since I’m not submissive by nature, but chose to bend myself to the directions of the dom, mostly out of curiosity.” Luci’s face feels scalding. There’s no way Sam’s buying into his unmoved performance.

“You had a threesome with two guys?”

“Mhm. But I’m not going to go into detail on that one.”

_Not for all the money in the world…_

Sam chuckles and looks down on his lap with a little embarrassed smile. “Wow. Now I feel like a blushing virgin in comparison. I’m not nearly that experienced… You might be disappointed,” he says, sounding disgruntled.

Luci snorts. “Hardly, Sammy.” He looks around, taking stock of their surroundings. Further down the street there’s an empty police car parked in front of a diner. Some people are moving about, but not too many. He looks back at Sam. “Having casual sex is one thing. But you know what I fantasise about?”

Sam looks up again and shakes his head.

Luci strokes a finger over Sam’s lower lip and smirks. “This,” he says and leans in to steal another kiss. He means for it to be a quick one, he really does. He just keeps underestimating the level
with which Sam reciprocates. He should have learned by now. It’s time to embrace the fact that Sam actually honest-to-god desires him, in face of current evidence, no matter how unlikely he himself finds it.

Every time they’ve kissed this far it’s been equal to a nuclear reaction—now’s no different. For all the shyness and blushing, Sam’s not even remotely restrained once their lips touch. Luci finds himself being partway pulled into Sam’s lap, almost dislodging the hand-break with his hip in the process. One strong arm wrap around his midriff, the other hand dig into his hair, curving around the back of his skull. Sam’s mouth is hot and needy. He kisses like he’s starved for it, holding nothing back. All the selflessness he holds himself to normally, is traded for appetent rapaciousness. It’s inebriating.

Hands start wandering, finding their way inside shirts, mouths exploring jawlines and necks, things are heating up real fucking fast. It also sinks in, that Sam’s just confessed to knowing it was him he sexted with tonight. That Sam must have imagined them, not just some faceless stranger. And that is as mind boggling as it is arousing.

It’s not comfortable, making out in the front seat of a medium sized car. The handbrake, shift stick, and steering wheel all dig in where they shouldn’t, and Luci’s legs are trapped at an awkward angle. But for once, it’s a good thing. Because as much as Luci is on board with Sam’s version of taking it slow (and he’s REALLY on board with it)—there’s still a fucking cop car parked within sight. And all it’d take is one accidental bump on the horn for them to signal to the policemen enjoying their lunch, that right here is a public indecency charge begging to be filed.

Luci tears himself away from Sam, almost changing his mind, thinking ‘to hell with it’ when Sam makes a noise of protest in the back of his throat. “Cops,” he pants as he heaves himself backward into his seat, and gestures with a thumb in the direction of the offending vehicle. Sam goes from looking affronted by being cut off, to breaking out in a giddy laughter, Luci joining him. He feels bubbly and fizzy, like sparkling water on the inside. Not to mention how painfully hard he is.

“You want to come in?” Luci asks when Sam once again opens the car door for him outside of his house.

“I’d like that, yeah,” Sam answers and ignites the hum of anticipation under Luci’s skin. He wonders if he can coax another makeout session out of the gargantuan siren following behind him up the gravelled walkway. He doesn’t have to wonder for long.

When he digs for his keys in his pocket Sam slides his arms around his waist and drapes himself to his back, kissing his neck and making every hair on his body stand on end. “I thought you wanted to take it slow, to catch up,” Luci says roughly, trying to ignore Sam in favour of figuring out how to perform the task of unlocking his door.

“All caught up and speeding ahead,” Sam breathes into his ear just as the lock clicks open.

Luci holds back another one of those stupid giddy giggles that keeps wanting to blurt out of him. “In that case…” He opens the door, spins around, latches onto Sam’s mouth, grabs his own wrist behind Sam’s backside just below his ass, and lifts.

Sam half squeals half laughs in delight, as Luci carries him inside and kicks the door shut. “I’m too heavy,” he protests, but nevertheless locks himself in place by hooking his legs around Luci’s waist and winding his arms around his neck.
“I’ve told you to stop. questioning. what. I. say,” Luci growls, tasting a new patch of salty skin on Sam’s neck between words. “I’m a man. of my. word.”

Sam appears to be childishly delighted about being carried. He is heavy, but holds his own weight up well. Luci pushes him up against a wall to grind against him, kissing until they’re both dizzy and breathless. Then he pushes them off the wall and blindly carries Sam to the bedroom. They fall onto the bed, Luci spinning in the fall so that they both land on their sides. It probably hurts Sam’s leg a bit as it does Luci’s upper arm where it gets bashed by Sam’s body in the landing. Not that it really registers, because as soon as Sam doesn’t have to hold himself up, his hands begin to roam, tugging to get Luci’s shirt off. They kick their shoes off, inexpertedly trying to divest each other of clothes without letting their mouths leave skin or mouth bared for long. Eagerness makes it both awkwardly uncoordinated and hot as hell. Luci kind of hates how soon Sam discovers how fucking ticklish his sides are—especially since he discovers it by using his tongue, and it would be bad manners to ram an elbow in the back of a lover’s head in self defense.

Luci’s mouth keeps running, words—unfiltered and profane—encouragements, praise, and reprimands, spill freely with no conscious thought. Sam’s not a talkative lover—nor a quiet one either, by all means, making all kinds of wonderful sounds—but when he talks it fries what’s left of Luci’s brain cells. “I’ve watched the video of you coming so many times, Luci. Imagining what you’d taste like, feel like. I need to taste you.”

At one point Sam remembers Luci’s tattoo and asks him to flip over to his belly so Sam can see it. Turns out, when Sam said he thought tattoos were hot, he made an understatement. And Luci sends a silent thank you to Charlie for getting sometimes less-than-brilliant ideas while inebriated or high. (Ideas, that Luci 99.99% of the time went along with.) Getting tattooed was a jackpot kind of idea, apparently. And if Luci can get Sam to stick by him, the tramp stamp may not be the last tattoo he gets.

“Top or bottom?” Luci asks breathlessly while they’re sweatily sliding against each other. Not that Luci would mind coming by frottage alone. He’s fought off orgasm a couple of times already because he doesn’t want this to end. He’s floating on fucking cloud nine.

“Bottom? Unless you want me to top?”

Luci just makes a noncommittal grunt and reaches for the lube on the nightstand. Sam gets pissy and impatient when he thinks Luci takes too long prepping. Luci doesn’t understand it. For him, the kind of pain that comes getting something up your ass is the worst. He’d rather take a thorough beating in a heartbeat. He doesn’t mind bottoming as long as his partner takes his time, slowly and patiently opening him up until the burn is minimal. Sam just bats his hand away and shoves three fingers right in (Luci was up to two), pairing it with an impatient bitchface of proportions. “See. All done. Just go slow and we’ll be fine.”

So Sam hadn’t lied when he said he liked the burn. “You do that, and I’m tempted to just sit back and watch you fuck yourself. This is a sight for gods, Sammy.”

“So fucking be one,” Sam complains angrily, sexual frustration radiating from every pore.

Luci laughs happily, half wanting to be a teasing little shit, half gagging to climb on. He obliges. Teasing Sam now would just be punishing himself too.

When Sam comes he almost bucks Luci off jackknifing, squeezing so hard around Luci’s cock they both cry out. It’s not easy to keep from following right along. “Where do you want it, Sam?”

“What?”
“I’m going to come any second. Where do you want it? In you, on you? Fucking where? I can’t hold it much longer!”

“In me. Come inside of me, Lucifer. Fill me up, come on, just fill me up, please.”

And that’s it. Luci’s dead. Scorched by the too hot perfect man writhing underneath him, *fucking begging*. He’s Icarus to Sam’s sun, and he’s plummeting helplessly towards the ground. While he doesn’t actually pass out, his wits certainly checked out, blown away by pleasure. When he comes too he’s panting for oxygen, lying heavily on top of Sam, who’s fucking laughing. “Care to share what’s funny with the class?” he drawls tiredly.

“I dunno, Luci. I can’t tell what goes on in your head,” Sam chuckles mirthfully. “I’ve heard people say a lot of things when they come, but never heard anyone cursing about the sun before,” he chortles and wraps his arms around Luci.

“Mmh. In the future I’ll just have to make my wings out of sturdier stuff than wax. So I don’t have to die the next time you take me to heaven,” Luci mumbles, only half coherent in his post-coital bliss.

It sets Sam off laughing again. “Dude. You sure do like your mythology.”

*That laugh is all for me. All mine.*

Being the datee wasn’t all that hard after all. Life’s looking up as far as Luci’s concerned…
Admitting the Problem

Chapter Summary

Sam wakes up with Luci and for once life is really good. ^^

Chapter Notes

TRIGGER WARNING: DISCUSSION OF PAST SUICIDE ATTEMPT!

Admitting the Problem

Surveying the Battlefield

Sam wakes up slowly. Awareness filling his senses like molasses. He’s lying on his back in a bed, but it isn’t his bed—it’s too soft and hard at the same time. Hard enough to give perfect support, but soft enough to be comfortable. His whole body is full of aches, not to mention his ass, that feels thoroughly abused in the best of ways. He’s pillowled on an arm, has a leg slung over his thighs, and everything smells of Lucifer and sex. The comforter only covers the bottom half of his body and fingers with work-rough pads trails gentle patterns over his chest and stomach.

He needs to pee, but doesn’t want to move yet. Not even to open his eyes and reveal that he’s awake. He’s too comfortable. By the light visible through his eyelids it’s morning, and not too early. That means he’s slept better, longer, than he’s done for ages. (Unless you count the sleep you get on sleeping pills, and that’s not the kind of sleep that leaves you feeling rested.) And he really feels rested. Happy and relaxed in every fibre of his body.

He thinks about yesterday. The initial plan had been to take Luci out on a couple of dates to get to know him better. To make mystery man and Luci merge in his mind. Maybe kiss a little. (Hah!) Yeah, so those plans had been scrapped pretty quickly. One-on-one, Luci really was mystery man. There was nothing to merge. He talked like he texted. Used the same expressions. And that made it a bit weird because that meant, to Sam’s mind, that they’d already had sex. Twice. And had already seen each other—at least in part—naked. At the same time they hadn’t, which was… a bit awkward—or would be, had Luci acted as if it was. Every touch was electric and distracting. And he was holding back for his own sake, not on principle, so after the cramped make out in the car Sam thought he was being stupid for stopping something from happening, that they both wanted.

Lips are pressed against his shoulder in a gentle kiss. “I can tell you’re awake, you know? It’s making me a bit nervous. You’re not planning a Coyote Ugly escape, now are you?”

Sam snorts a silent laughter and opens his eyes. “That obvious, huh?”

Luci narrows his eyes at him, making him laugh out loud.
“No. I’m not planning my escape route,” he assures Luci with a smile. “I’m trying to convince my bladder that I’m still asleep, so I don’t have to leave the bed.”

Luci’s lips curve up in a smile and he places another kiss on Sam’s shoulder. He looks tired, but at the same time soft and relaxed, without all the layers of defensive armour usually present in his demeanor. “Glad to hear it. You slept well,” he says—a statement, not a question.

“Yeah. I’ve slept fantastic. How bout you?”

Luci shakes his head. “I didn’t sleep. At least not all of me. My arm is dead to the world. So maybe we should keep it down, lest we wake it.” Luci wiggles his fingers on the arm pillowing Sam’s head, to demonstrate which arm he’s talking about.

Sam laughs again. He feels so light, happy, and content. “Seriously? You’ve been awake all night watching me sleep?”

“Mmmh. You’re beautiful when you sleep. And I was a bit afraid you’d regret what we did, and this was all I’m going to get, so I didn’t want to miss a thing.”

“You’re fucked up,” Sam says fondly. “No. No regrets. Except needing to pee.”

Luci’s smile gets bigger. “In that case I suggest you go do that and hurry back.”

“Alright.” Sam grabs Luci’s hand stroking patterns on his stomach, gives it a kiss, then sits up and runs a hand through his hair. He hears Luci snigger and twists to look at him. “What?”

“90 percent of the world’s population would hate you on principle, if they knew all you had to do to get perfect hair in the morning, was run a hand through it once,” he says with a smirk. He purses his lips thoughtfully and taps a finger against them. “They might forgive you though, once informed of how much you fart in your sleep.”

Sam laughs, squeezes his eyes shut and feels his cheeks heat up in embarrassment. “Shut up.”

Luci sniggers. “Oh, don’t be like that, baby. I don’t give a shit. No pun intended.”

Sam opens his eyes to find Luci directing a shiteating grin his way. “Maybe I wouldn’t have farted as much if you hadn’t so thoroughly abused my hole so many times yesterday,” he counters.

That makes Luci look self-satisfied like a cat with a bowl with cream. “As I recall, you begged me to.” He sits up and leans against Sam’s shoulder, placing another kiss on it. “You’re not one of those prissy princesses who denies having bodily functions, are you?” he asks, scrunching up his face like he finds the very idea off-putting.

In response Sam lifts one of his buttocks a little and farts noisily. Luci throws his head back and laughs, Sam chuckling along. He gives Luci a shove, making him fall back down on the mattress. “You’re a freak,” he mutters, his cheeks straining in a huge grin, and gets up. Luci’s still laughing behind him when he leaves the room.

No wonder Dean likes him. They’ve got the same shitty humour.

He’s not complaining though. It’s just another detail of awkwardness that Luci dispelled, making it easy.

He catches sight of himself in the bathroom mirror, smile still straining his pink tinted cheeks. He looks happy. He feels happy, and it shows. Eyes bright and sparkling. He looks really good. He sees a faint bite mark on his upper arm and touches it with a little thrill in his belly, smile growing.
He looks down on the rest of his naked body, finding other evidence of their repeated efforts yesterday. He’s got bruises by his hip from their last round, when he kept egging Luci on to go harder. Some other marks from God knows what.

Luci is a fantastic lover. He manages to be both unrestrained and controlled at the same time. Controlled, in the manner of being very aware of Sam’s reactions, and when in doubt he asks (less than politely), “Good or bad, Sammy? Goddammit I’m not a mindreader! What does that sound mean?” Sam’s always had a problem putting words to what he wants and likes in bed while in bed. He feels embarrassed voicing his wants. (If he’s gonna talk sex, he does it outside of bed.) Luci, though, has no such scruples. He’s the most talkative lover Sam’s ever been with. Which made Sam break out in laughter or giggles repeatedly. And not in the sleaze-porny Oh-yeah-baby-suck-that-big-dick-way. No he cursed, and praised, and complained freely in a way that meant you never had to guess if he liked what you were doing or not. And then, in the middle of it, he’d throw in a random mythological reference out of nowhere.

Like when he’d been giving Sam an enthusiastic blowjob. Suddenly he’d popped off and climbed up on top of Sam—wild eyed and debauched—grabbed him by the jaw and demanded “How many, Sammy?” confusing the hell out of Sam. “What?”, “How many have you lured to crash against the sharp rocks of Sirenum Scopuli?” Then he’d clambered back down and devoted himself to previous task like he never stopped. It had taken Sam a solid five minutes to stop laughing. Just thinking about it now made him chuckle. It certainly was the most creative way he’d ever heard anyone being called a siren.

Having sex with Luci was like having sex with a scholarly poet with a bad case of tourettes, and no inhibitions whatsoever. He also made sure the both of them ate and drank in the breaks in between when they laid talking about everything and nothing. And that’s where control came into the picture again, because while Sam was too blissed out to remember the rest of the world, Luci still remembered to go up and feed Lucy, make dinner for the two of them, then coax Sam into joining him for a walk with Mikey, since Wayne couldn’t take him for long walks. They had left Mikey back with Wayne overnight and watched some crappy movie. He couldn’t even remember what movie, because it had turned into a slow, sensual make out session on the couch where neither of them had said a word. It had led him to believe that he’d only seen a fraction of who Luci could be in bed and as he feels right now, he’d gladly spend the rest of his life discovering all sides Luci kept hidden inside.

Sam relieves himself and goes back to the bedroom. He finds Luci sitting up, flexing his arm and fingers, trying to work back some blood flow. “Luci, you could just have woken me up when your arm fell asleep,” Sam says as Luci lifts the blanket to let him slip back under it.

“I could. But I know you’re battling insomnia. I’ve told you, I’ve had problems with it too, at times,” Luci says and plasters himself to his side again, throwing a leg over his thighs, while supporting his head on the hand previously asleep so he can look down on Sam.

“Yeah you said. When was that?” Sam asks curiously, trailing his fingers along Luci’s (strong!) arm currently resting on his stomach.

“After Charlie went backpacking. And before I met her in college. I got three to four hours tops the first year. Didn’t eat very well either. I was quite frankly, miserable, in the wake of being disowned. But I’d prefer if we didn’t talk about that. Not yet. I’ll tell you in the future, should you want me to. Now will you close your eyes and let me enjoy your body as I please?”

Sam chuckles, brings Luci’s hand to his lips and kisses the fingertips. “Yeah, sure,” he says and closes his eyes.

Luci hums in satisfaction and starts trailing reverent touches over his torso. Kissing and tasting his
skin with his tongue. It doesn’t take long before Sam’s breathing hard, has goosepimples all over, and is struggling to keep still. He has a faint smile on his lips and thrilled butterflies in his stomach. Luci isn’t allowing him to participate actively. Anytime he reaches for Luci, his hand is gripped and firmly pressed to the mattress again.

He suddenly remembers that today is a workday, and he’s on sick leave. It makes a ball of guilt form in his belly. Right now he feels great, not sick at all. He should be at work, not lying in bed being spoiled like a minor god.

“Okay, Sammy. What just happened?” Luci asks and stops what he’s doing.

Sam opens his eyes and looks down on Luci, who’s worked his way down to his hips by now. Luci stares back up at him with a serious expression. “What? Nothing.”

“Don’t lie to me, Sam. I don’t like it. Something just made you tense up and put a wrinkle between your brows, and it wasn’t felicity or pleasure. So spill.” Luci climbs back up and lies down in their original position, holding his head up on his hand to look down on him with a concerned expression.

“Um. It’s nothing. I just. I’m on sick leave. And right now I feel really good, you know? And, I just felt, selfish? Like I should be working. People are depending on me, and I just—”

“Luci puts a finger to his mouth to shut him up.

“Mh. First off. I need to tell you the most horrible truth of them all. Everybody, and I mean everybody is replaceable, in the grand scale of things. We don’t like to think so, since it lessens our importance. But it’s also how society has kept working. And when you think about it, it’s also a blessing because it means that anyone can take a breather and the world will not fall apart. That includes you.” He bops Sam on the nose. “You’re struggling with depression—”

“Dean told you that?” Sam cuts in.

“No, jackass. You did. The amount of loss you’ve experienced in your life, the insomnia, the workload you bury yourself in. You fit the whole world into that giant heart of yours, only leaving a single person out—you yourself. That, to me, screams major depression. As much as I’d like to fool myself that engaging in a romance with me, would magically cure that, it doesn’t work that way. It requires some considerable alteration of how you think, and that takes time and work only you can do. Moments of happiness will help of course. And I intend to do my best to inject as many boosts of endorphins, dopamine, and serotonin as you’ll let me.” He smiles a mischievous smile that Sam can’t help but to return.

“I also would like to address how you keep confusing selfishness with self-respect,” Luci goes on. “Me, now I’m selfish. I know that and I’m not ashamed to admit it.”

“You keep saying that, but I see you act unselfishly all the time,” Sam protests.

“You need to understand that, while you act unselfishly, you don’t feel that way. Selfishness is putting your own wants above the needs of others. I do that. I prioritise myself. That includes taking good care of people I like, or squashing miserably pathetic excuses for people like the Sunshine Hill killers. I take cases like Dick Roman’s, not because I need the money, but because I love the challenge, despite the consequences to others. I do whatever fuck makes me feel good, for no other reason than that it does, and avoid doing things that make me feel bad for the very same reason. That doesn’t make me bad, but that doesn’t make me good either. But you,” Luci taps a finger to Sam’s chest. “You confuse self-respect and selfishness, when it comes to yourself. Hence you don’t have any self-respect.”
“I’ve got—"

“Nuhuhuh!” Luci stops him with a finger to his lips again. “Self-respect is putting your own needs before the wants of others. You don’t do that. Everyone needs to eat, sleep, relax, and do things they enjoy. As strong as you are, you run the risk of making yourself a doormat by being selfless. And the only ones to appreciate a doormat is people with dirty feet. Your clients want your help, yes. But you’re no use to them if you burn yourself up.” Luci kisses his forehead and cards through his hair. “Think of it this way, if you want a new pair of shoes and the store is closed you don’t break in and demand to be served. You either go to another store or you wait until the store opens again. And nobody blames the store owner for closing now and then, right?”

Sam opens his mouth to reply, but closes it again. Maybe it’s because he’s just gotten to know Luci, or because he holds the other man in such high regards, or maybe Sam’s just open to hearing it right now, but what he’s saying hits home. And because it does, what Dean told him in the kitchen starts making sense too. ‘I have to remind myself that my uttermost concern should be me, cuz when I’m happy, being happy for others doesn’t come with a hollow echo deep inside.’ The strange visit from his boss comes to mind, and the print on the cup. ‘You can’t pour from an empty cup’. It feels like he’s having a goddamn epiphany, even if he’s not completely sure what it means right now. “I, I have to think about this,” he says.

“You do that. While you’re thinking, can I do that thing, where I fuck you into the mattress?” Luci says, looking cheeky as hell.

Sam bursts out laughing. “Oh my god. Way to change the subject,” he grins. The guilty knot in his stomach is loosened for now.

“Is that a yes?” Luci says and gnaws lightly on Sam’s shoulder while looking up hopefully at him. Sam just keeps laughing. Luci sombers up. “Sam, can I ask you a personal question?”

Sam collects himself. “Sure.”

Instead of saying anything, Luci takes his wrist and turns his arm to reveal the inside of his arm. He looks at Sam with concern in his face, and ever so gently caresses a finger along the faded vertical scar. Sam’s cheeks burn hot, his heart starts pounding hard and fast, and his mouth goes dry. He swallows dryly, not knowing what to say. The moment drags, while Luci just looks at him. When he doesn’t answer the unspoken question Luci verbalises it. “Is this what I think it is?”

Sam hesitates for a beat, then nods.

“This is a morgue type of cut, how are we still lucky enough to have you here?”

He takes a deep shuddering breath, then lets it out. “Dean. Um… we were living together at the time. ...I’d told him I needed to be alone. And he let me. But, um… he came home. I dunno why. Get a clean change of clothes or something like that…” Sam swallows again. It’s hard to talk about. He’s ashamed of it. It reminds him of how weak he is. Why Luci shouldn’t want him. Luci reaches for the water bottle he keeps on the nightstand and hands it to Sam. He drinks gratefully then fiddles with the bottle, not looking at Luci. Luci is doing the same thing he did in the car when he’d panicked about forcing Luci. Projecting calm. It’s no wonder animals like him. In the car he’d dominated, he doesn’t now. He’s just quiet and listens like time doesn’t exist. Keeps caressing the faded scar, waiting, appearing safe and non judgemental. So Sam talks.

“It hurt like hell. But… I was ready, you know? I don’t remember ever feeling as calm as when I decided to do it. I did my research. I knew slitting across would lessen the chance of success. I drank a lot of water the day before to enlarge my arteries. Filled a bathtub with hot water and dropped a relaxing bath bomb in it. Dean buys them. He’s a sucker for Lush products. You’d
never guess, huh?” Sam chuckles mirthlessly and drinks some more water. He doesn’t look at Luci, but he can feel his gaze. “I drank some valerian tea beforehand. We didn’t have any other sedatives at home…. um. I used a straight razor. It hurt so much I almost couldn’t… but I was calm. Felt at peace. For the first time ever. It was going to be over. I was ready… Dean came when I had slit both wrists and was waiting for it to be over. I was dizzy, felt cold and clammy. My heart was beating so fast and I was getting short of breath. But I was still conscious when he found me, and he has some first aid training, you know? As a fireman. And I… I mean, I slipped into unconsciousness when he was stopping the bleeding and speaking with 911 on the phone. They told me later that I was lucky. That a minute or two later and it’d been too late…. I didn’t feel lucky.” He takes another deep breath and lets it out slowly, feeling exceedingly vulnerable, waiting to be judged. Or worse, pitied. “So you shouldn’t want me, Luci. I’m messed up. Broken.”

Luci snorts. “Darling, look at me.” Sam meets his gaze for the first time since he started talking about this. “Do I seem like person who yearns for the flawless? I have a three-legged dog, for god sake. And frankly, some days, I consider removing another one, because the fucker has so much energy I can barely keep up.”

In spite of himself, Sam chuckles.

“Frankly, if you were flawless, I’d be suspicious. I can’t believe anyone but me can be perfect.” He gives Sam a impish grin and a wink, making Sam laugh again.

“Bullshit. You don’t think you’re perfect.”

“You got me. I lied. And I promised I wouldn’t do that to you. Oh, dear.”

Sam laughs again. The heaviness of the subject dispelling with every crappy joke.

“Can we make a deal, Sam?” Luci asks, sombering up.

“What?”

“That if you ever get these thoughts again,” Luci touches the scar on Sam’s arm. “You let me be the Scheherazade to your Shahryar? But instead of 1001 nights, you’ll give me 25,000 nights to tell you a story, leaving you on a cliffhanger so you’ll have to stick by us another night to hear the end.”

Sam’s lips twitch. He does a quick head count to figure out how many years 25,000 days would make him, adding up his current age. “You’re giving up on me when I’m a 100 years old, huh?”

“Don’t be like that. Come on, Sammy, work with me. I’ll probably be speaking through a voice box like Stephen Hawking by then. A man’s got to rest sometime,” Luci whines, scrunching up his face in a displeased way that Sam might love, even if it is a grimace. Especially when it comes paired with a bad case of bedhead.

“You think you can come up with that many stories?” Sam asks smilingly.

“Sure. I’ve read a lot of books. Kept a shitload of them too. I should probably digitalize them, but in the event of a zombie apocalypse, electricity might be scarce.”

Sam laughs. He can’t remember the last time he laughed so much. There were times in his youth, when he and Dean travelled for long hours in the Impala and Dean would just talk bullshit like Luci is now, and Sam would laugh until he could hardly breathe. And for every laugh the next one came more easily, same as now.
Great. I’m dating my brother.

Well they do say girls subconsciously look for their father in a partner…

Yeah. Maybe not gonna dwell on that.

“So you’re saying you’ve prepared for a zombie apocalypse by collecting books?” Sam asks with sceptical amusement.

“Mhm. Want to see it?”

“Alright.”

They get up and get dressed. Once they got their clothes on Luci pulls him in and kisses his brain out—morning breath be damned—until they’re on the verge of undressing and going back to bed again. He might hate Luci a little for his self-control when he stops. “Is it too early to tell you I love you?” Luci asks, possibly stopping his heart for a moment. “It is, isn’t it? Fair enough. I’ll wait.” And with that Luci steps away from him and turns his back, heading for the door. He is left standing, dazed, vulnerable, and jubilantly happy, almost on the verge of tears. Part of him feels like fleeing in panic to south of nowhere to hide, but a greater part of him wants to stay here always to find out if Luci meant what he just said, and if he’ll keep meaning that. Because it feels like love, for him too.

He collects himself and follows Luci out, to find him pulling down the ladder in the hatch to the attic in the living room. Lucy is lying on her cat highway above the kitchen door, watching curiously. “Here. Climb up,” Luci invites and gestures up to the attic. In Sam’s house, it’s almost completely empty. Sam climbs up to find that it’s not the case here. There’s barely any room to move because of all the books.

“Wow,” he says, blinking in the semi darkness of a single lightbulb. Luci climbs up behind him and winds his arms around his stomach, resting his chin against his shoulder.

“I have more in storage, but these I deemed worthy of keeping at home. Over there, there’s science books,” he points with one arm, keeping the other one firmly around Sam’s waist. “Over there, fiction, politics, and there’s the autobiographies, and psychology, religion…” He rattles off a multitude of categories.

“Have you read all these?”

“Yes. It’s mostly bullshit. But even idiots hit the nail sometimes. Come.” He lets go of Sam and leads him in between the stacks of books, to a wooden locker, he opens it, throwing an excited look at Sam over his shoulder, lit from the bright light that comes on within the locker when it’s opened.

Curious, Sam makes his way to Luci, who steps away and bites a nail, exuding a nervous energy. Inside the locker he finds a first edition of every issue of Unnatural ever to hit the market, in pristine condition. Including a couple of issues that were recalled and re-written due to criticism to the angel/hunter romance in them. (Basically, they contained porn, that were reduced to subtext in the rewrites.) There were also an issue that was rumored to have been printed, but that never hit the market at all. “Holy shit! This is awesome, Luci! Have you shown Dean this?"

Luci shakes his head, looking proud and excited like a child. “No, I haven’t.”

“He’s gonna crap his pants if he sees this. Can I…?” He makes an aborted movement to grab the issue that had never hit the market.
“Go ahead.” Luci eagerly motions for him to read.

And so another hour is spent geeking out about Unnatural. Dean is the big geek in the family, but this series is special to Sam, full of good memories of Dean reading to him, and of escaping to another world, that, in a way, wasn’t too different from the life he and Dean lead at the time.

Lucy is the one to break them out of their geekathon. She comes up, meowing loudly, reminding them that feeding her is, and forever should be, the number one priority.

At the breakfast table Sam speaks up between bites of his sandwich while Luci reads the newspaper on his phone. “So what do you think I should do?”

“Hmm?”

“I mean. About my job. And the… my depression.” He feels awkward saying it. He doesn’t like to admit to himself how bad it is. But what Luci said in bed keeps popping back into his head.

“You work at Rainsborough Law, right?”

“Yeah?”

“Request a meeting with Tom and tell him exactly what you’re going through. He’ll help you, I’m sure. Let you cut down on your workload, and give you the time you need to find your footing again. Knowing Tom, he’ll probably let you be on paid sick leave, whatever your contract says.”

“You know Thomas Rainsborough?”

Luci purses his lips and squints at Sam, like he’s considering something, before speaking up again. “When I was fresh out of college our clients moved in the same circles. So we’ve been to the same parties. And met in negotiations and in court at times. Long time ago, now. But I don’t believe he’s changed too much.”

It’s a small world indeed, considering Luci knew Gabe too. Maybe he should start asking people straight off the bat if they knew Luci. He wonders how many affirmatives he’d get. “I like him,” Sam admits. “And he’s a great lawyer.”

“I always won,” Luci counters with a self-satisfied smirk.

Sam chuckles. “You’re such an ass.”

“Indeed. But a brilliant one. Go talk to him, Sam. And don’t worry about money…” he halts and looks thoughtful. “Say, you wouldn’t let me pay off your mortgage, would you?”

“No! Oh my god.”

“It’d be a gift, not a loan. No strings attached. If you’d decided to just fuck off the moment after I paid it, I wouldn’t hold it against you. You’d owe me nothing. Such is the nature of gifts.”

“No. Dude! You can’t just go around paying off people’s mortgages like that. My god.”

“Aw, come on, darling. Work with me. Why not? I gave my secretary a condo the other day.”

“Bela? Why?” Jealousy flares hot and ugly in Sam’s belly. He doesn’t like to be reminded that Luci spends his workdays along with possibly one of the hottest women in Cali. He certainly doesn’t want to hear about Luci buying her friggin condos.
“Because she’s the best fucking secretary I’ve had, and I’d like to keep her to myself, not lose her to someone better paying or whatever. Come on, Sammy. Let me do this for you. Your life would get so much easier. You’ve got a rich boyfriend now. Why not take advantage of it?”

“Boyfriend? Are we boyfriends?”

Luci gets that annoyed-confused nose scrunch expression again. “Aren’t we?”

Jealousy forgotten and replaced by happy butterflies instead, Sam answers with a smile growing on his lips. “Yeah. I guess we are.”

Luci smiles right back. “Well then.”

“Still no, though.”

Luci grunts discontentedly and goes back to reading on his phone, but Sam can’t stop smiling.
Knots Unravelling

Chapter Summary

Sam has inadvertently hit Luci in the head with a realisation, like the apple hit Newton, just by talking about his depression.

Chapter Notes

Folks, since this is the story about how Luci and Sam got together, we're nearing the end. I have two threads I need to tie together first. I think we're talking two or three chapters? But there will be timestamps in this 'verse.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Knots Unravelling

All wars come to an End

Luci strides briskly out of the elevator, Mikey at his heels. Bela is at her desk typing away, phone pinched between her shoulder and ear. Luci stops in front of her and leans on his knuckles over the desk, staring intently at her. Mikey continues into his office to rest in his cage under Luci’s desk.

“...Oh, sweetie, that would be assuming I care whether I’m inconveniencing you or not. Which I don’t. Now, this conversation is getting tiresome, so I’m going to hang up on you. Just make it happen.” With that Bela hangs up, cutting off the sputtering on the other line. She arches an eyebrow imploringly at Luci. “Yes?”

“What’s the nature of our relationship?” Luci asks, pinning her with intense focus.

Bela leans back in her chair, frowning and giving him a what-the-fuck-are-you-talking-about? kind of look. “That should be obvious, should it not?”

Luci shakes his head.

“Luci, if this is some kind of attempt from your side to sleep with me, I’m telling you straight off the bat, you can consider yourself friendzoned.”

“Aha!” He snaps his fingers in her face. “That’s what I’m talking about! Are we?”

“Did you forget to take your medication this morning or something? Are we what?” She looks at him like he’s gone totally out of his mind.

“Friends?”
She looks at him skeptically, then leans forward and crosses her arms in front of her, leaning on the desk. “Sweetheart, people like you and me don’t have friends. And you’re not paying me to be your psychologist. Which is what you seem to be needing today, if I may say so.”

“I might be paying you for that, considering you’re probably equally qualified for it, as you are for your current position, judging by the bogus credentials you presented us with,” Luci counters, lighting an amused spark in Bela’s eyes and making her lips twitch.

The elevator dings and the doors slide open. Curtis Metatron steps out reading a document. Luci straightens up, points at him with a straight arm and snaps his fingers once. “No,” is all he says. Curtis looks up at him, then takes a step back into the elevator and pushes the button down again. Bela sniggers. Luci makes an impatient sound and turns on his heel to enter his office.

Bela sighs audibly. “This isn’t some kind of trick to get out of giving me a raise when time comes, is it? In that case it won’t work.”

Luci stops in his track and turns back to his secretary with a fed up expression. “Of course not.”

“In that case, yes. If I’d ever admit to having friends, which I don’t, I’d count you as one. Now, let’s never speak of this again, shall we?” Bela says, gives him a pointed look and goes back to her typing with the air of a clear dismissal.

Luci looks at her for a moment, being totally ignored and feeling quite affectionate towards her for it. “Fair enough. Call Trenton and see if you can move our meeting to just before lunch. And tell him to bring Buddy along.”

“Who’s ‘Buddy’?” Bela asks, looking up.

“Need-to-know basis. Just do it,” he answers and goes into his office, hearing her make a displeased sound as he closes the door. He smiles to himself and goes to sit by his desk, peeking underneath it to check up on Mikey. The dog looks up long enough to blink sleepily at him before going back to sleep. Satisfied that Mikey is comfortable, he straightens up again and grabs his phone.

It’s funny how talking to somebody else, telling them what they do wrong, can make you see that you’re doing the same without even knowing it. Like looking in a twisted mirror. Charlie had told him so many times that he was cynical and blind to how people saw him, and that if he would just open his eyes he’d see that he had people out there that liked him for no other reason than him being himself. He never believed it.

But over the day yesterday, Sam had brought up his depression repeatedly, talking about how he felt, what he’d gone through, and looked at Luci like Luci knew what the fuck he could do about it. Hah! He’d read more books about psychology than he cared to think about. If there is one thing he knows for sure, it’s that there’s not one single way that works for everybody. He used his knowledge of psychology to manipulate people to get whatever result he wanted in his job. Which is to say, he knows how to break and bend people. But heal them?

His own bouts with depression had been vastly different from Sam’s. He got angry and rebellious instead. He’d rather see mankind laid to waste than take his own life, for an instance. But he’d told Sam he should stop isolating himself, spend some quality time with people who cared for him. They’d be understanding if it suddenly got too much and he needed to withdraw. Knowing Dean, Gabe, and Cas, they would. He also told Sam not to be closed to friendly overtures from people around him, if nothing else, to break him out of his pattern. Apparently two of Sam’s workmates continued to invite Sam to have an after work beer and Sam always turned them down in favour of going home to keep working.
And while Luci was telling Sam to keep an open mind it just came to him, in bold neon letters, that he’s been doing exactly what Sam was doing. Closing himself off. Maybe, just maybe, Charlie was right. And he intended to find out today.

He calls Gabe first.

“Luci boi! What owes me the pleasure?”

“Gabe. You told Sam we’d been friends for years. Is that true?”

“Isn’t it?” Gabe asks in bemusement.

Luci hums, feeling surprised. “I suppose it is. Thank you. I’ll see you later.” He hangs up without bothering with proper goodbye or explanation. The call was purely banal. He thinks about all the people he likes, and that he’s felt that he wanted to be friends with, just like Gabe. All the while Gabe had already considered him a friend. How many others felt the same? And how about the friends he thought of as purely Charlie’s friends?

He calls Ennis, a guy he and Charlie hung out with in college. The number is dead so he searches the internet for a number to Ennis. He finds one he thinks is the right one and calls it.

“Ennis Ross, speaking.” The voice sounds familiar, giving Luci hope.

“Ennis? Hi, it’s Nick Alighieri.”

“Nick! My man! Haven’t heard from you in ages. How’s it hanging?” Luci’s taken aback by the sheer enthusiasm in Ennis response. They end up talking for fifty solid minutes, catching up. Ennis doesn’t even mention Charlie. When they hang up Luci finds himself with an invitation to come visit, and has extended one himself. He feels a bit overwhelmed.

He calls another one of Charlie’s friends, this one not from college, but whom they’d hung out quite a bit with now and again. He’s a hacker just like Charlie. Turns out Ash currently lives in Nebraska, at a place called Harvelle’s Roadhouse (that’s right, lives). Luci’s makes a mental note to check with Sam or Dean if Jo has any connection to it. Ash doesn’t ask about Charlie either, but does ask Luci if he’s up for some online gaming sessions, as it was too long since they did it according to Ash.

Bela sends him an email confirming that Cole Trenton will be coming in 30 minutes before lunch, bringing his dog. Luci makes a few more phone calls. Even one to Sam’s boss, even though their last contact eight years ago had been anything but amicable.

Lastly, he calls Charlie. “C, you were right. You were fucking right and I should have listened to you,” is all he says before hanging up. Now he just wants the workday to be over so he can meet up with Sam again.

Not that he has done any actual work yet.

And Sam said he was going to be busy tonight anyway. Damnit.

Being in love and miserable isn’t all that different than being in love and happy. He can barely sleep or remember to eat when he’s away from Sam. It’s been two intense days. Not that he’s complaining…

Sam rings the doorbell and waits. When nobody answers, he puts a finger to the doorbell button and holds it in, hearing the annoying prolonged ringing faintly through the door. He gears up to
unleash hell when he finally hears the lock click, but deflates when it’s Cas that opens and breaks into a brilliant gummy smile when he sees Sam. “Sam! How delightful to see you up and about. Come in, come in,” he says while stepping aside and motioning for Sam to come inside.

“Hi, Cas. Is Dean at home? I’m here to commit fratricide.”

Cas’ lips quirk in a tiny smile, amusement glinting in his eyes. “Dean informed me that might happen. I apologise for not telling you, but Dean…” Cas makes a little apologetic half-shrug. Sam suddenly remembers Dean’s heated warning glare to Cas when he was about to speak up, while Sam and Dean was arguing about Luci’s offer.

“It’s alright, Cas. You’re the one who has to live with him. I get why you didn’t tell me. It’s my idiot brother I want to punish.”

Cas chuckles warmly. “He’s in his playroom.”

Sam frowns in confusion. “Playroom?”

“Oh, we haven’t told you? We bought a cabinet bed for the guest room and remade it so we still can have guests stay overnight, but Dean can have a room to play in. To be frank, if I was a guest here I’d rather go home than sleep in there now. It’s a bit of a nightmarish insight to how your brother’s mind works.”

Sam gives him a dubious look. “You haven’t turned it into a sex dungeon, have you?”

Cas quirks an eyebrow. “Do you honestly believe I’d let him play by himself in there, if we had?” Cas tilts his head and looks thoughtful. “Although, if we installed a glass door…”

“Oh God. Please don’t,” Sam says and turns his back, hurrying towards the guestroom. He can hear Cas snigger behind him, proving once again that Cas' humour wasn’t all that different from Dean’s when it came down to it.

Mental images of his big brother playing with himself in a sex dungeon was not what he came here for!

It’s with some trepidation he stops in front of the closed door. He takes a deep breath to strengthen himself for the upcoming fight he intends to pick, then opens the door.

The sight that meets him is not what he expected, and he gets stuck just staring.

It looks like one of those challenges where you’re supposed to look at a room for a few minutes then try listing as many things as it’s possible to remember. Or possibly, the room of some tinhatting conspiracy theorist.

For starters, there’s three (!) desks. One by each wall except for where the cabinet bed is. There’s a mini fridge with a glass door, containing beer and soda. There’s a huge whiteboard on one wall, several cork boards on the other walls, maps, post its, photos of different things, charts, documents, newspaper clippings, needles pinning red yarn between stuff. And that’s just on the walls. (Most disturbing might be that in the lower left corner of the whiteboard Dean has written “The Clown Did It”. Sam doesn’t want to know.)

The two things all the desks have in common is one set of photos of him and Dean, and Cas and Dean, (different photos though) along with a stress-ball (one of which looks like a boob, nipple and all). That’s where the similarities end as each desk seemingly contains its own project. On one desk there are gadgets and tools. It looks like Dean’s been trying to combine a toaster with an 80’s walkman, and an old sewing machine. (Sam’s actually kinda curious about that one.) There’s a
simple stool in front of it, the kind gets higher or lower depending on which way you spin it. Another desk has a lot of close up pictures from a burned out house, along with a note pad full of scribbles, a turned off laptop, and a bunch of post it notes. It’s the only one with a regular office chair.

The third desk is where Dean is currently at. He’s sitting on one of those huge exercise balls people have instead of chairs, bouncing on it, while he is comparing two documents with extreme focus, a keyboard shoved out of the way. Now and then reaching out to squeeze the yellow smiley-faced stress ball on the desk. The computer screen in front of him shows some sort of list, and the internet browser must have at least thirty tabs open. Apart from that there are mostly maps and notes around him.

“Hah! Cas, I think I’ve finally found him,” Dean says without looking up. “Better call Luci boy, and see if he’s willing to sponsor a trip to Argentina.”

It’s enough for Sam to remember why he’s there. He crosses his arms over his chest and plasters on his most disapproving expression. “Found who?”

The effect his voice has on Dean is nothing short of comical. He jumps back with a little yelp, but the ball he’s sitting on gives him extra bounce so it looks like a parody of some kind of gymnastics when he lands standing up, flailing his arms for balance. “Sam! Sammy. Sam-sam-samm-ey. Eh. Good to see ya,” Dean says with wide eyes and a fake smile. Oh, yeah. He knows exactly why Sam’s here. Sam remains quietly glaring at him, and he remembers Sam asked a question. “Um. Luci’s neighbour, Wayne. Have you met him yet? He’s got a son he hasn’t seen since the lil dude was five. And I found him. I think. He’s a beekeeper in Argentina. Whatta ya know, right? Heh.”

“Why didn’t you tell me, Dean?”

“Since you don’t know Wayne I—”

“I mean who mystery man was, you asshole!” Sam snaps impatiently.

“Oh. That,” Dean says as if he didn’t know perfectly well what Sam was talking about.

“Yeah. That,” Sam agrees coldly.

Dean drags a hand over his face and takes a deep breath. “Number of reasons, Sammy.” he says, reaching out to roll the big exercise ball towards him. He keeps his gaze locked on Sam, sitting down on the ball. “T’was for your own good, really.”

Sam sputters. “For my own good?? Fuck you! You think I’m stupid? You were laughing your ass off behind my back!” He gestures widely and stabs a finger accusingly in Dean’s direction.

“Well, yeah. Obviously. It’s hilarious,” Dean says and rubs his neck.

Sam can feel his anger starts flaring hotter. “Dean!”

“Come on, Sammy. Like you didn’t take a piss on me for failing miserably to ask Cas out for a full fucking year. You teased the shit outta me for it!”

Sam opens his mouth to reply, but closes it again. He looks away from Dean, mouth a thin line, crossing his arms. He had been relentless in his teasing. Seriously. Dean who always was so smooth and good at flirting had been a fretting mess. Barely able to get a word out when Cas was near. Teasing was destined to ensue. (Hey, what are brothers for, right?) But that was different.
Dean’s lowkey bouncing on the ball rubs on Sam’s nerves. “Still. You should have told me.”

“And what would you have done if I did? Huh? Tell me, Sam,” Dean says and stands up, spreading his arms, palms out. “Cuz, I gotta tell you. The way I see it you would have stopped talking to Luci altogether. And you like the guy. You had fun and relaxed while texting. When do you ever relax? Anytime we come over, all you do is work. And, and, the whole mystery man thing gave you a chance to put your nerves aside. Fuck, you couldn’t say a word to the guy without putting your foot in it, and you know it.”

Sam shifts on his feet. “That’s not the point.”

“No. You know what else? If I’d have told you, you’d just felt stupid for not seeing it for yourself, and crawled even further into your shell. You’re fucking smart. I knew you’d figure it out sooner or later.”

“Not as smart as you apparently,” Sam says bitterly.

“Dude, of course not. You are emotionally involved. It makes people blind. I mean, I couldn’t figure out Cas liked me despite us staring at each other for fucking minutes at a time, with dumb smiles on our faces. It took Cas nearly dying for me to get my shit together and fess up, and I was still totally dumbfounded that he felt the same.”

Dean takes a couple of steps closer, rubbing a hand back and forth over his hair, making a mess of it. “Come on, Sam. You wanna talk about being stupid? How about me hitting myself with a hammer, or burning myself on the stove, on. fucking. purpose, just so I could go to the hospital and see him. How’s that for being smart?”

Sam fights the twitching in his lips. He isn’t going to smile, dammit!

“And,” Dean continues, “look at Cas. He’s the fucking head surgeon for Christ sake! Any time I came in he left everything so he could put a fucking bandaid on me or whatever. If it wasn’t for Cas’ severe lack of cooking skills we’d probably still be doing that shit.”

The first snort laugh escapes Sam before he can get it under control. He’s pointedly not looking at Dean. If he did he’d crack up. They’d been such stupid morons.

“Think about it, Sam.” Dean taps his temple. “If I’d told you, you’d never gotten together. If I’d told you, you wouldn’t have gone on that cyber-date or whatever. There wouldn’t have been someone who you’d let keep you company in your isolation. And I gotta tell you, that scares the living shit outta me,” Dean continues.

“I can take care of myself, Dean,” Sam snaps and glares at him.

“But you don’t!” Dean snaps back, the submissive posture he’d been holding vanishing in a heartbeat.

“And what? You expect me to just forgive you like that?” Sam snaps his fingers to enhance his meaning.

“I don’t need you to forgive me, Sam! I need you to be fucking happy! If you should decide to never speak with me again, fine,” Dean says, raising his voice angrily, scowling and making fists at his side. “I can live with that. If that means you’ll get yourself put together. I can’t fix you. I’ve been trying all my life and I keep failing. Maybe what you need is to be without me. Maybe I’m the one dragging you down. Maybe someone else can do for you what I can’t. If that’s what it takes…oh fuck.” Dean’s face crumbles, tears welling up. He turns his head away and rubs at his face angrily with a hand. “I just want you to be happy, Sam. It’s all I’ve ever wanted,” he says.
with a broken voice.

Sam could handle mocking, teasing, general douchery and shouting. Hell, he could have handled a fist fight. He’d actually expected this confrontation to escalate into one. But he hadn’t expected to see his big brother crumble into tears, looking like a helpless little child all at the sudden.

The idea of breaking contact with Dean hadn’t even crossed his mind, it’s too absurd. That was not how their arguments usually went. He’d be mad and give Dean the ice queen treatment after the initial shouting match, until something came up and he forgot he was mad (that was when Dean was in the wrong). If he’d done something wrong they’d scream at each other and he’d end up saying something mean, usually triggering a fight. They’d end up patching each other up and when he tried to say sorry Dean would wave it away with a nonchalant ‘Pfft. It’s forgotten already.’

For Dean to even say something like that he must have thought about it.

“Christ, Dean! How can you even think that?” The mere thought of losing Dean in his life jars Sam from anger to fear. Making his belly feel like it’s filled with ice.

Cas chooses this moment to pop in his head. “Sam, are you staying for dinner?”

Sam turns his head and stares wide eyed at him.

Cas looks back and forth between him and Dean with a blank face. “Undecided, then. I’ll make sure there’s enough for you too if you decide to stay.” And then he’s gone again.

Sam looks back at Dean, still kind of shocked. “You let Cas cook?”

It was not what he intended to say.

Dean’s lips twitch and he casts a tentative glance at Sam. “No. Of course. Ain’t got sprinklers installed yet,” he jokes. “He’s ordering Chinese.”

Sam takes a deep breath and runs a hand through his hair, suddenly feeling too tired to argue. “Dean. Look. I’m still mad. You know me. It’s not going to pass that quickly. But. You’re my brother, and I love you. And I’m...” he sighs, and shifts. “I’m trying to get a hold of my, my depression. I don’t know how. But I’m going to try. And I need you for be there for me. Like you always have been.” It had been hard to admit that it was a problem. Is a problem. It makes him feel weak and useless. But it had been easy to talk to Luci. Fairly easy anyway, considering. The guy could listen, and had a way of easing the tension with jokes but without shying away from the topic at hand. It should have been much more awkward than it was, talking about stuff like that with his new boyfriend. It helped too, that Luci already seemed to have figured it out beforehand. ‘Try this, and if it doesn’t work, try something else. You’ll get there,’ he’d said. Which was exactly what Dean said he’d done.

“You know it, Sammy. I’ll always be there for you.”

Sam nods and looks at the floor. He puts his hands in his pockets and sways back and forth on his feet a bit. He came here to fight, but he’s missed Dean, while his stupid brother’s gone into hiding. Maybe he’s mad about that too? Dean ducking out when he’s done something he knows Sam won’t like. It isn’t the first time.

“You... you still into Luci boy now that you’ve shagged?” Dean asks.

Sam smiles at his feet. “Yeah. More even. The better I get to know him.”
“Yeah?”

“Yeah.”

Dean chuckles. “That’s good, because dude’s fucking gone on you. He’s real serious about ya. Wanna see what he sent me after you got together?”

Sam looks up, curious now. “Yeah, I do.”

“Oh okay.” Dean digs up his phone. “And don’t freak out. He’s a lot like me okay? All in, you know?” Dean warns while he opens up the text convo. He steps closer to Sam and hands him the phone.

Luci boi: [Photo attached - Luci’s beaming face and bare shoulders visible, lying in bed lit by early morning sun. The top of Sam’s head (mostly just hair) visible, resting on his chest.]

Luci boi: How soon is too soon to propose?

Dean: Right on. With Sam? Probably a year or ten. ;)

Luci boi: Oh fuck.

Sam laughs. “Maybe planning our marriage is a bit too soon. But ten years?”

Dean grins and dries his tears. “Yeah. But you’re the cautious type, wanting to take it slow an’ all. I figured I’d give him a heads up. Specially with your idiotic idea about being cursed.”

Sam smiles. “I don’t know, Dean. It feels good. It feels really good. Look. I haven’t felt like this since Jess. And I’m tired of being scared, you know? I think I’m ready to let go of that and just see what happens, you know? And, I dunno, not be scared for once.”

“That’s my boy!” Dean’s practically beaming when Sam hands the phone back.

It’s draining to be angry, and to be mad at Dean. He’s already had an extremely draining meeting with his boss today. It had gone a lot better than expected. Mr. Rainsborough had been very supportive. And while his boss hadn’t told him the circumstances around it, he’d said ‘I’ve been in your place, Sam. You’re not alone. I know it’s not easy, and it takes time. But you’re important to us. We’ll help you find your feet again, any way we can.’ So Luci had been right in his prediction. Sam knows he won’t forgive Dean this easy. He’ll probably bring this up again. Possibly at the most inopportune moments. But the energy just kind of ran out in the face of Dean’s sorrow and Cas’ interruption.

“So… playroom, huh?” Sam says tentatively, looking around.

“Pfft. Cas calls it that. I call it ‘the Mastermind Center’,” Dean says, making air quotes.

“And here’s where you evolve your conspiracy theories?” Sam jokes.

Dean looks like he’s about to snap defensively, but thinks better of it. He takes a breath and looks around. “Nah. It’s kind of my thinking room.” He points at the desk with the pictures of a burned out building. “Work. That case, they think the store owner did it, to get the insurance money. Which is bullshit. It’s fucking obvious that the clown did it. I just need to figure out how to prove
it so it will hold in court for when your ilk takes over. The police officer I’m working with on this case is so set in his mind I just wanna, you know, gnnn…” He makes a fist and holds it up as if to punch. “Anyway.” He points towards the desk he was sitting by when Sam came in. “Wayne. Have you met him yet?” He looks up at Sam for confirmation and gets a nod. “He has a son. The mom took his son away when he was five and Wayne has searched for him ever since. It was a sonova bitch try’na track him down but I think I’ve finally found him.”

“In Argentina.”

“Yeah. Figured, since Luce is quite eager to spend his money, maybe he would sponsor a trip there to get it confirmed, and check if this Cain dude is interested in getting reaquainted with his dad. I don’t wanna tell Wayne about it unless he does.”

“And that?” Sam asks and points at the desk with the weird contraption.

Dean stares at it for a beat, sucking his lips. “Yeah… not working as it should. Please don’t ask. I’m not quite sure what I was thinking.”

“Care to explain the ball?”

“Oh. That. I think better when I’m in motion. Drives my colleagues at work mad. So that was Cas idea, actually. He started spouting letter combinations. I dunno. As long as he loves me he can tell me I have any fucking diagnosis he wants. Zero fucks given. He’s a doctor after all, what does he know?” Dean grins impishly and shrugs, doing a dismissive hand motion.

Sam sniggers. He thinks about Dean’s annoying habits of making farting noises with his mouth, tapping pencils or bouncing a leg while he reads, and yeah. He can totally see why his workmates would go mad. “Okay, and what is…” He points at something on the wall and lets Dean tell him about all his projects. He does stay for dinner. Telling Cas and Dean about the last couple of days with Luci. When he comes home he feels like he’s run a marathon, been hit by a bus, studied for too many midterms, all at once. He’s drained and empty. Even if the fight kinda fizzled.
and holds him pressed against his chest, snoring softly. Mikey’s tail, wagging against Luci’s foot is what woke him. He lifts his head to see Lucy has come to join them, currently laying down with Mikey, kneading the dog with her front paws. He smiles to himself and falls back asleep.

Chapter End Notes

There's a timestamp to this chapter--One More Call--containing Luci's call to Tom's boss. It doesn't tie into the main story, and has nothing to do with Sam, just to Luci’s past. I cut it out from the main story for that reason.
To The Rescue

Chapter Summary

A glimpse into Sammy's current homelife.

Chapter Notes

IMPORTANT: Exactly what is needed to crawl out of a depression is different for everybody. What doesn't work for Sammy might work for you, and the other way around. But you should know, you're not alone.

WARNING: It's soo fluffy! I didn't mean for that to happen, it just did. This is why I don't write newly established domestic relationships. -.-'
There are only two more chapters to this story, to tie up loose threads. After that there will be timestamps. Mainly because this is their meet-cute story and I'd like to skip ahead to when things stops being so goddamned pink and fluffy. Where's my goddamned angst and pain, huh? Tell me! Believe you me, this, this right here? It won't last forever. *evil smirk spreading* I'll make sure of that. Mwuhahahaha! (I mean, they'll last--most of the time--but it won't always be this fluffy.)

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

To The Rescue

Late Troop Arrival

“Come on, Sammy. Don’t knock it until you’ve tried it.”

Sam rolls his eyes and shifts the phone to his other ear. “Dean. I don’t need any god damned therapy, okay? I’m doing fine.” He still got that melancholy feeling ever so often, that ball of anxiety, as if he’d done something wrong. He still felt lazy and selfish when he didn’t work as much, even though, with Luci in his life he didn’t want to work all the time. They were in that phase when everything’s still pink, fluffy, and sparkly. One look, or sentence still sent Sam’s heart racing and made his belly fill with hymn singing butterflies. As for work, in the beginning Mr. Rainsborough had suggested he'd take on the simplest jobs, those he could do in his sleep, (as to not add the burden of worry with job related issues, and to minimise the risk of failure). It had just made him miserable, feeling even more useless. So instead Mr. Rainsborough handpicked his cases, giving him the hardest ones, to the downright impossible. He didn’t get as many, but those he did get were fun and inspiring, and made him feel as if he was really helping people.

He can hear Luci in the other room, arguing with the dog. “No. I said no! Fuck sake, will you cut it out?! God damned tripod mongrel. Look at Lucy, she knows how to behave herself.” *crash*
Sam’s shoulders shake as he tries to keep from laughing out loud. Luci is the epitome of a grumpy old man that talks to himself, except he talks to the pets. Or the bees and birds in their garden. Correction. Luci’s garden. (He keeps making that slip of thought.) He hasn’t moved in. He just happens to sleep here most nights. He has his own set of keys. He hadn’t planned on accepting them, but the third time Sam had shown up in the middle of the night after trying to sleep alone, Luci had just opened and held them out to him. When he refused to take them, Luci had informed him he’d leave the door unlocked so he could come and go as he pleased. It was a dirty trick, because Sam had lost too many loved ones already, and Luci was under constant threat. He begun to picture worst case scenarios straight away—hence, he’d taken the keys.

“That’s the point, Sammy. You’re doing much better. I can see it. Think of it this way,” Dean goes on while Sam puts his feet up on the third kitchen chair. This is by far his favourite spot in the house, with full view of the bird feeders out front, always buzzing with hummingbirds. “You’re in the ocean. You’ve been under the surface, but now you’re above it, able to breathe. The only way out of the ocean is to scale up a giant cliff wall, and you’ve clawed your way out, clinging onto the lower part of the wall, basking in sunlight. But you still have a long way to climb before you’ve got solid ground beneath your feet.”

Sam rolls his eyes. “Dean, that was the longest, most useless metaphor for saying I still haven’t got my shit together.”

“Fine. So I’m not motivational speaker of the year. All I’m saying is that because you’re doing so well it’ll be easier to do even better. You’re thinking clearer. Trust me. I’ve been there.”

“You know how I feel about therapy.”

“Yeah, but this ain’t nothing like that shit they put you through at the cuckoo’s nest. There ain’t no doctor talking to y’all like you were babies, and handing out cookies. It’s just ordinary people.”

Sam had been institutionalized for a month after his suicide attempt. None of his experiences from that had been positive. “How do you even know that?”

“Um… I went there, of course. To check it out for you. Sat in on a meeting.”

Sam frowns. “You went to a self help group for people in mourning?”

“Yeah. Sure. Why not?”

“And they just let you?”

“Um… It’s not like they knew I didn’t fit in. I can lie with the best of ‘em.”

Sam scowls and upsettedly waves a hand around. “Oh my god, Dean. Have you no respect for people’s integrity? These are people in mourning, for god’s sake. Not some kind of entertainment for bored assholes like you.”

“Just, just try it, Sam. Five meetings, that’s all I’m asking.”

“No.”

“Three. Three meetings. If you hate it, you can tell me to go fuck myself.”

“I’m telling you to go fuck yourself now.”
“One meeting. One single meeting. If you hate it, don’t keep going. If you don’t, go to another one. Come oooooo.” This is exactly how Dean got Sam to date Sarah. (And to do a shitload of other stuff over the years.) He’d beg, and plead, and argue, until avoiding doing whatever Dean wanted was a bigger hassle than actually doing it.

Luci comes shuffling into the kitchen, scruffy jeans and some geeky star wars shirt on, hair looking like he’s just rolled out of bed despite they’ve been up and about for hours. Mikey comes trotting after him with a hopeful look. (Hey, they’re in the kitchen, there’s lots of stuff to be hopeful about.) When Luci passes Sam he reaches out a hand and touches Sam’s hair in a soft caress without even looking, and Sam just loves that. It’s like whenever he’s within touching distance, Luci’s hands are drawn to him by invisible magnets. “You talking to Dean?” Luci asks and opens the fridge, taking out some kind of vanilla filled sweet bun, split in the middle to make room for a thick layer of whipped cream, and covered in powdered sugar. (One of Gabe’s creations.) He takes a huge bite and leans against the kitchen counter, chewing like a chipmunk, and totally unconcerned about the powdered sugar covering half his face. It’s hard to believe that it’s the same man that took him out to a fancy restaurant yesterday, and cut all his food in dainty little pieces.

*When did that shit become adorable? I hate when Dean does it…*

Sam nods. “Yeah. He wants me to go to some self-help group therapy.”

“Cool,” Luci says at the same time as Dean goes “Is that Luci boy? Let me talk to him,” in the phone.

“I said no,” Sam informs Luci, ignoring Dean.

“Huh. In that case, can I go?” Luci asks and stuffs another humongous bite into his mouth, then scowls down at Mikey who’s sitting at his feet, drooling, licking his lips and doing that thing where his eyes become double their normal size and sad, *so* sad. There can only be one outcome of that war of wills. Sam withholds a smile.

“Why would you want to?”

Luci shrugs, still having his stare off with Mikey. “You learn a lot by listening to people, Samwise. Could be fun.” Lucy comes striding into the kitchen with her tail in the air, looking her queenly-self. She sits down beside Mikey, looks up at the creamfilled goods in Luci’s hand, gives Mikey a disdainful look, then promptly proceeds to scale Luci’s leg up to the counter (Luci barely flinches at the pinpricks of her claws going through his jeans). From the counter she jumps up on Luci’s shoulder and reaches for the bun he’s holding near his mouth. “Fuck sake, Lucy. Not you too,” he says and holds it out of her reach. (His Deanish eating behaviour at home might actually have a valid explanation after all.)

Inside Sam’s warring about laughing at the two front attack on Luci, and indignance at the behalf of whoever goes to those meetings because they need it. “It’s not supposed to be *fun*, Luce! Besides, you don’t belong in that group.”

Luci does a sturgeon face and a sweeping gesture, palm out, with the hand not holding the sweet. “Believe it or not, darling. I *can* lie with the best of them.”

“Oh my god! You two are horrible people!” He glares at Luci, who just gives him a mischievous close lipped smile.

“Here. Let me talk to him,” Luci says and holds out his hand for the phone. Sam hands it over. “Yello’,” Luci says and takes another bite of the bun, this time not caring about Lucy swiping her
paw out, catching a big blob of whipped cream. Seeing the cat lick cream from her paw makes Mikey add pitiful whistling whines to his poor-starving-abused-dog routine. Luci looks down on him and blinks with a blank face. “Mhm. Wait, let me just…” He pinches the phone between shoulder and ear, reaches out for the pen attached with a magnet to the fridge. “Repeat that.” He scribbles down what Dean says on the shopping list pad, also attached to the fridge with a magnet. Sometimes when Sam goes shopping he’ll stop and just stare at the list, enchanted by how such beautiful (and readable) script pass as scribbles for Luci. “Nah. If he doesn’t want to go, he’ll be closed to it and it won’t help anyway. No need to nag at him. He won’t be helped, if he doesn’t want to be helped by it. You know how it goes.”

You manipulative son of a bitch!

Sam crosses his arms and glares relentlessly at Luci, who, he’s convinced, is fully aware of the fact, even if he’s gone back to leaning his back against the counter while looking down on Mikey’s pathetically begging face. Luci knows exactly what makes Sam tick. (Which he loves, to an extent. Even if he refuses to admit that.) He’s being manipulated. During the four months they’ve been together now, Luci has become downright masterful at steering him. In this case the trigger phrase is ‘doesn’t want to be helped…’

Like when Sam’s car broke down and Luci offered to buy him a new one. He’d said no. You don’t just buy people cars. He isn’t some kind of charity case. He can provide for himself, thank you very much! He isn’t going to be one of those, who’re totally dependent on their signif to provide for them. Nevermind that any deviation from a month’s budget (like a car needing to be fixed) prevented ends from meeting. They had fought about it, which had ended in angry sex, and angry sex with Luci was fan-fucking-tastic. So afterwards, when they’d lain panting and blissed out, Luci had said ‘Would you at least borrow my car until you can afford to fix your own?’

It hadn’t seemed like an unreasonable request. So he had taken him up on the offer. But when he came home that day he’d found a new Dodge Ram 1500 EcoDiesel Crew Cab 4x4 parked on the drive way. Not for him. Oh no. Lucifer wouldn’t go that far. He isn’t some creepy Christian Grey. But Luci is a sucker for loopholes, so he’d bought himself a new car, making the Prius redundant to himself. Why the hell he’d bought such a huge monstrosity though, eluded Sam until the weekend, when all four of them (Mikey and Lucy included) packed themselves into it and went to Bobby’s vet station. There they drove with Bobby into the nearby nature preserve to release some rehabilitated wildlife, giving Luci a valid excuse to buy a truck meant for off-roading. So now they both had something to drive and Sam’s so in love with the quiet, fuel efficient Prius—along with still struggling with the mortgage—that there was a big chance his own car will never get fixed.

Then there’s the case of Lucy’s new collar and name tag. He’d come home to find her with a green suede collar in a shade that made her yellow-green eyes pop, so soft and supple he wondered what it’d feel like wearing it, or one like it but fitted to him. The golden name tag had ‘Lucy’ engraved in Lucifer’s own handwriting, with Sam’s phone number on the other side. Sam had removed it (not wanting Luci buying him expensive stuff and trying to make a point), only to find a new one there the next time he saw the cat. According to Luci, it was a gift to the cat, not to him, so he could just suck it up. A hunch had made Sam take the name tag to a jeweller, only to get it confirmed that it was 24 karat gold. He suspected that if he kept taking the tags, Luci would just buy new ones, so he let that one slip. (Also, perhaps he was just imagining it, but Lucy seemed proud of her new collar. But maybe that was just because it was a more comfortable fit than the last.) And these were just two of many things Luci did to work around his unwillingness to let Luci buy stuff for him.

“No. That’s not my fault. Sam made me switch my phone off,” Luci says, declaring a shift in the subject. “Yes… that’s right. Since Thursday morning. Can’t turn it on until Monday when I leave
for work…. I don’t know why. Because he said so…. Pffft. Hey, you’re not the one getting blowjobs from the guy. You’ve got no say in this.” He winks at Sam, whose lips twitch in response.

Luci had been a sulky spiteful child when Sam made the request. For about three minutes. Then he’d asked what the punishment was if he refused, and when he got the answer ‘nothing’, he’d switched it off with no further questions or protests. To be honest, Sam hadn’t had a good reason to ask, more than to see if Luci would comply. He’d been thinking about what Luci said about no one being irreplaceable at work when he asked, wanting to see if Luci counted himself into that statement. Apparently he did.

“We still on for tomorrow?…Alright, see you then.” Luci hangs up and hands the phone back to Sam, cramming the last of the vanilla bun monstrosity in his mouth, frowning down at Mikey.

“I’m not going,” Sam states.

“You said,” Luci answers him, but addresses Mikey next. “Damned dog! I don’t like dogs, you hear? Stop looking at me like that! I know you’re not starving, because I’m the one feeding you. Oh, what the—” He opens the fridge, takes out a can of Reddi Wip whipped cream, then takes two small plates from the cupboard, places one on the counter and squirts some cream on it for Lucy (who jumps onto the counter as soon as the plate is placed), and places the second one on the floor for Mikey, giving him a bigger dollop.

Sam laughs. “You’re such a pushover. You know how unhealthy that is for them, right?”

“Funnily enough, I don’t think they care,” Luci snipes and puts the can of cream back in the fridge.

Mikey was by now nothing but a big muscle, getting so much exercise that they had problems keeping weight on him. And to be fair, when Luci really meant a command, the dog listened.

“So why’d you write the place and times for the meetings on the fridge?”

Luci washes his face over the sink, dries it with a hand towel, and plops down on a kitchen chair, placing his bare feet on the same chair as Sam has his socked ones, and grips Sam’s foot lightly with his toes. “I told you. I’m going.”

“You can’t be serious about going through with that?”

Yes he could, and Sam knows it.

Luci just sighs and gives him a dry look with a raised eyebrow.

“What if… we could go together?”

“No. That negates the point. I can follow you there and pick you up if you want, but if you’re going, I’m not. The idea is that you’re supposed to be able to talk freely with other people in similar situations as you. I may, at times, be part of the problem, darling. If I’m there you’ll be uncomfortable unloading. And what’s said in those meetings stay there.”

Sam drums his fingers against the table top. He knows he’s being manipulated to try it out, but without being pushed the way Dean does it. Luci would respect him even if he didn’t go. At the same time, Luci would go at least once, for no other reason than having said he would. And that didn’t sit well with Sam. “Alright. I’ll go to one meeting. That’s all.”

Luci gets up from his chair, comes around the table and gets to his knees beside Sam, crosses his
arms on Sam’s lap and peers up at him. “Hey, I’m not the one you need to placate here. It’s your brother chewing the bit on this one.” He smirks. “I’m thinking, you can just as well stay here for some sex therapy,” he says at winks.

Sam laughs and then grins wickedly down at Luci. He pets Luci’s hair. “I could. But there’s a major flaw in that suggestion.”

“What?”

“You said that if I didn’t go, you would…” He raises his eyebrows meaningfully, waiting for Luci to see the gap in his logic.

“Oh fuck.” Luci makes a face, realising the problem. Sam laughs at him. “Well, dear, we’ll just have to have that therapy session straight away then,” Luci says and suddenly Sam finds himself being lifted bridal style as Luci gets to his feet.

He’s practically howling with laughter as he’s being carried to the bedroom. He barely remembers to catch the door handle on the way in so that the door closes. Luci cares jack shit if the pets are in the room/on the bed while they have sex, but Sam doesn’t like it. (His boyfriend could probably perform just as happily on stage, not a care in the world, as long as Sam’s involved.) Lucy will sit on the dresser and stare at them disdainfully like they’re disgusting, and Mikey will pace nervously around the bed, toting around his favourite stuffed toy. Ever so often he’d jump up on bed and sniff at them. Getting a wet dog nose at the sole of your foot, or in your face while having sex kinda spoils the mood for him. Once they’re done Mikey will lie on the floor chewing obsessively on the neck of his toy for another half another hour at least, making small barely audible whiny noises and looking distressed. So yeah, closed door it is.

“Damnit, you overgrown ent. Stop laughing! I’m trying to be romantic here,” Luci admonishes with a fake put upon expression. Which, of course, only makes Sam laugh harder. He’s unceremoniously dumped on bed and Luci crawls up after him, trying to keep from breaking out in laughter too.

Romantic isn’t the right word for it. Sure, Luci can be extremely romantic. Doing grand classic gestures of romance, like that fancy date they were on yesterday for an instance. But it’s the little things that melts Sam’s heart. He always seems to have a feeler out for what people around him needs. Like when Dean is grumpy, a Snickers will land in his lap before anyone else has even begun to consider it being due to low blood sugar (seeing the result - pissbaby-Dean is often a result of low blood sugar. Who knew?). When Sam and Luci is out together, looking in stores or whatever, Luci will suddenly buy a bottle of something to drink and hand it to him, when he himself has just started to realise he’s thirsty. (When he asked Luci how he knew, he said Sam had been swallowing and smacking his lips, something Sam hadn’t been aware about doing.)

Or when he had a bad day for no reason. He’d just felt that immense drain, like he hadn’t slept for years (He sleeps so much better now that he doesn’t sleep alone.), and everything was a chore. He doesn’t get it. Why does he still have these days when he feels like crying for no reason? He’s happy. He shouldn’t logically have them. But Luci came in and found him sitting on the sofa, staring unseeingly at the papers in front of him. Luci had gone around the couch, lowered himself down between him and the backrest, wrapped his arms around his midriff and leaned his head against his back. He kept waiting for Luci to say something, but he never did. Finally Sam said “Sorry for getting like this. I don’t understand why you put up with me.”

“Are you kidding me? This is perfect. I can take advantage of the fact that you don’t have the energy to run away. Abuse you for cuddles, come out looking like a supportive boyfriend, and at the same time hide that I’m really doing it because I’m pathetically touch starved,” Luci answered, tone warm and full of dry humour. Naturally, it had made Sam laugh, and dispelled some of the
guilt he was feeling about being burdensome. They’d laid down on the couch, holding each other, not talking, not even watching TV, until that heavy feeling wasn’t quite as pressing anymore, and he felt hungry for the first time during that day.

Today isn’t one of those days, and he’s pretty sure that ‘sex therapy’, shouldn’t leave you with abdominal muscles aching from laughing too much. It’s Luci’s fault. He keeps saying something quirky (on purpose) every time Sam’s finally got his laughter under control, then admonishing him for laughing, knowing full well it will have the opposite effect. How on earth they manage to complete the task at hand is a mystery. Nevertheless they do. Luci lies on top of him, between his legs. Hands twined together on his chest, chin rested against them, wearing a smug yeah-I-dun-good expression. “How do you feel about getting a tattoo?” he asks.

“You know I’m going to get one with Dean someday.”

Luci hums and purses his lips, getting a thoughtful frown on his face. “I was thinking more like ‘My heart is devoted to Lucifer’, right… here…” He reaches out and touches Sam’s forehead.

Sam imagines standing in a courtroom, pleading a case in front of a judge and jury, with that tattooed on his forehead. It takes him minutes to stop laughing.

“Hey, darling. How was the meeting?”

Sam’s barely inside the door before Luci asks. Luci’s lying on the couch in a state of total rest. Earlier he’s been very busy caring for both their and Wayne’s garden, before that, he and Sam had gone for a long run with Mikey. It’s Saturday, and a lot of their friends are coming over. The interior of their (Luci’s, damn it!) house had changed quite a bit since Sam came here that first time. For an instance, the couch had just been gone one day. Luci had donated it to a newly opened home for girls gone astray, called Wayward Daughters. The next day Luci had been out shopping with Dean and the old couch had been replaced with a huge (frightening comfortable) fold out couch, along with two recliners of the type Sam and Dean had been dreaming of getting since they got their first pad together. Luci had built side-tables for them. There was some new art on the walls. Luci had been sitting by his computer, looking through Etsy (apparently, that’s where he bought all his art, including the stuff at his office) and had coaxed Sam into giving his opinion. Same went for curtains, rugs, and the likes. So before he knew it, Luci’s house had become a mix of both their styles, as Luci accommodated for him the same way as he had for Lucy and Mikey. The result, was that Luci’s house was more in line with his taste than his own was, as he’d left furnishing and decorating to Sarah when they moved in. Hell, Luci had even bought two huge colour coded bath towels with ‘His’ and ‘Hers’ on them, using the pink one with total nonchalance and leaving the blue one for Sam.

“Um… actually. It wasn’t all that bad,” Sam answers and kicks his shoes off. “Mikey at Wayne’s?”

“Mm-hm.”

When he decided he was going to go to the meeting, he felt he might as well do it as soon as possible. There had been a lunch meeting today, and he figured he could go, and then tell Dean it was not for him when his mulish brother came over in the afternoon. After all, he knew all about group therapy from the nuthouse. However, it had turned out that maybe it wasn’t such a bad idea for him after all.

He didn’t like everyone in the group, and he didn’t feel like sharing himself.

And yet…
You’re not supposed to know each other in these things. Not really. You were anonymous, only presented yourself with first name, and you didn’t have to talk if you didn’t want to. You were not allowed to tell people outside of the group what was said there (except your own crap of course).

It had not been what he’d expected. They met in a conference room a hotel donated the use of a couple of hours a week for the purpose. There were tea lights on the table and free coffee was served. It was pretty chill. Sam had expected a self-help group for mourners would be a bunch of people wailing about their dead ones. And one person had. He’d just lost his wife to cancer. But the people who showed up… different ages and different backgrounds. Some with recent losses, some who had lived decades with the burden of a loss. And when they talked…

It was a ‘YES! Exactly like that! That’s what I feel!’-moment after another. Some talked about the fear of loving, not thinking they could go through the horror of losing someone again. Some talked about the guilt, feeling like it was their fault somehow, even if it wasn’t. They talked about their depressions, about anger at the unfairness of it all. There was especially one woman in his own age, Anna, whose coping story could have been his own.

He left feeling like he’d been hit over the head with a board, wanting to cry. But lighter, too, at the same time. Because he wasn’t alone. He wasn’t a freak. He felt validated, somehow.

The group therapy at the mental institution he’d been locked into had been totally different. A bunch of people with vastly different diagnoses, none of them wanting to be there, sitting in a ring of chairs, while a soft spoken doctor all but applauded them for sharing their name.

Sam crawls on top of Luci and rests his nose against the crook of his neck, placing a kiss on his collar bone, feeling, rather than hearing, Luci emit a low content purring mmmmm. “It was good, actually, and I think I’m gonna give it a shot and keep going for a while. How did Dean know that this was what I needed? Specifically a group for mourners.”

“I don’t think he did. The point was to see if this particular channel worked for you or not. Usually it takes about three meetings before the general skepticism passes enough for people to be open to it,” Luci drones sleepily. “And it doesn’t have to be that, specifically. You would have fitted in with groups for adult children who grew up in abusive homes, or with mentally ill parents, or groups for chronically depressed, and a vast number of other groups. Even PTSD groups.”

Sam snorts. “PTSD,” he states with a great dose of aforementioned skepticism.

“Mhm. Survivor’s syndrome, more commonly referred to as survivor’s guilt, is nowadays not a diagnosis in its own, but umbrellaed under post traumatic stress syndrome.” Luci’s hand has found it’s way inside of his shirt at his back, drawing lazy patterns and coaxing goosebumps to life. “You work with rape victims occasionally. You should know they often suffer from PTSD. It’s not all about war, you know?” he explain with a half-asleep drone.

Yeah. Okay. He knows that. He’s just never thought of applying the term to himself. He makes a mental note to read up on PTSD. Thinking that, maybe understanding why he gets his ‘black days’ will help him prevent them from happening. “We should get up and start preparing. They’ll be here soon.”

Luci sniggers, turns his head and places a kiss on his temple. “No. I don’t want to. Besides, I’ve discovered a magical thing about our family. To see it, we need to not do anything.”

Our family.

It should be scary how fast Luci had them pinned as an ‘us’, and it is. It is scary. At the same time it put a huge grin on his face and makes him feel all warm, fluttery, and gooey inside. He loves
Luci so much it’s a physical ache at times. Even when he’s a condescending dick, which he can be. He’s bitter and jaded, and having people saying thank you to him when he does stuff for them, makes him visibly uncomfortable, sometimes snappish. But it’s all a facade. Luci’s so vulnerable on the inside. It takes so little to make him happy. Small acts of kindness touches him deeply. You have to know him to see how deeply. Like getting gifts for an instance. If he gets one he’ll act blasé about it. But the small watercolour flower painting Wayne had painted for him, is framed and put on his office desk the same way other have pictures of their children. He’d seen Luci stroke the bee keychain Dean had given him, looking at it with a soft smile, when he thought nobody was watching. The grumpy cat (“It reminded me of you, Lucifer.”) plushie Cas had given him shares the bed with them and is as likely to receive a stray petting as their other pets, or Sam himself for that matter.

Sam can’t afford to give gifts or take him on elaborate dates. Sometimes he feels like he isn’t enough, can’t give enough back in comparison to what he gets, emotionally speaking. But he tries. He leaves Luci post-it notes with little messages on them. Hides them in the books Luci reads, in his lunch box if he brings one, in his attaché case, under his pillow, or any other place he think they’ll be found, but not straight away. Luci never directly acknowledges having found them with words, but he saves every one of them in his wallet. Some messages are sweet, describing a quality he likes in Luci, or just cheesy (but no less true) lines like “I try to picture me without you, but I can’t”. Or “Sam ♥ Luci”. The first time he said “I love you”, he did it through a post-it.

Some messages are NSFW. “If you’re gonna keep rimming me during weekends, I’m gonna develop a rash from the stubble burn.” Luci had found that note in his lunch box. That day he came home looking infinitely smug, placed a soothing cream on the table in front of Sam, and gave him the most thorough rim job in history, later that night.

Some messages are teasing or jabbing. “Artichoke hearts? Really, Luci? That’s just gross.” Luci made a point of ordering a pizza with only artichoke hearts that day, looking for all the world like he was trying very hard not to break out in giggles for each one Sam disgustedly scraped off his part of the pizza.

“What’s up?” Sam says.

“Mhm. You’ll see.”

Sam isn’t all that tired, nevertheless he dozes off on top of Luci, lulled by soft touch, body heat, and steady breaths. The door slamming wakes him up with a jerk. Luci holds him in place, preventing him from sitting up.

“Christ. Don’t anyone lock their doors in this neighbourhood?” Dean complains as he comes in.

“Not when expecting guests. That’d mean we’d have to move from the couch to open,” Luci answers.

“Good point. I brought beer. Y’all set up?”

“No,” Sam answers. “We fell asleep.”

“Alright. Just keep your lazy asses pinned to that couch. Big bro’s here, to the rescue,” Dean says with a smirk, uncaps two bottles of beer, and puts them down on the living room table, within their reach. Then he digs up his phone and makes a couple of phone calls. “Hey, babe. Can you bring…”, “Gabe! You old coot. I need you to…”, “Jo! Mah sweet little action barbie. *snigger* Yeah, yeah, love you too. Can you…?”

Luci reaches out for the beer bottle on the table while Dean’s in the kitchen, talking with the
phone pinched against his shoulder and doing... well, who knows? “See, darling? I told you. Magic,” Luci says, voice full of warm amusement, before taking a sip.

Sam chuckles and sits up. “Maybe I should go hel—”

“Nonono. You stay right where you are. This is just the beginning. It reminds me of when Charlie lived here. Just. Just let me have this…” Luci protests and lifts his inner leg over Sam’s head to put it in his lap along with his other leg. He takes another sip of beer and starts flexing his inner arm.

“Dude. Your arm’s asleep?” Sam asks redundantly with a lopsided smile.

“What do you expect? You’re not exactly featherweight, jackass.”

“You know, you could just wake me up.”

“Pros and cons, Sammy. Pros and cons.”

Sam chuckles and shakes his head. To this day, Luci had never once woken Sam up when his arm or leg fell asleep from being slept on. (The same couldn’t be said for Sam’s part. He’s tried enduring, but having your limbs fall asleep on you is god damned uncomfortable.) Sam stretches, rolls his neck to get the crick out of it, grabs his beer and leans back into the couch. They hear Dean open the patio door and yell “Wayne! You coming over later, or do I have to carry your invalid ass?” They can’t hear the answer, but judging by Dean’s cackling, it was rude.

Dean goes to the kitchen, opening and closing cabinet doors, then comes and plops himself down in one of the recliners, putting the ingredients for a marinade on the living room table, and starts mixing them together in a bowl.

“I went to the group you suggested,” Sam offers.

“Yeah?” Dean says, temporarily halting his movements and looking up with pleasant surprise.

“Yeah. It was... good. I’m going to keep going. For a while.”

“Awesome. If it ain’t workin for ya, tell me and I’ll sniff out something else. It was fucking hell trying to find stuff like that on my own when I was trying’ to get better.” Dean smiles down at his work. “I have something to tell y’all. I’m not supposed to tell anyone yet, but you know how much I suck at keeping secrets.”

Luci closes his eyes, lips twitching, whole body shaking in withheld laughter. Sam finds himself smirking too. Dean is probably the only person he knows he’s sure could take any secret to the grave, should he want to. “Please. Do tell,” Luci chokes out, voice heavy with mirthful sarcasm.

“We’ve finally set a date.” Dean grins at them, eyes shining joyfully.

“That’s great! Congratulations!”

“Yup. Five months from now I will no longer be Dean Winchester anymore.”

“Wait. You’re taking his name?” Sam exclaims, frankly, shocked. The idea is... is... unthinkable. The mantra ‘We’re Winchesters! We can do this!’ is so ingrained, first from their father, then from Dean, that at times it had felt that it was all they had to hold onto—the only thing that kept them afloat—during rough times.

“Yeah. Sure. Why not, right? Guy came and swept me off my feet, and keeps sweeping. I don’t really care, but for some reason it’s important to him that I’ll be Dean Michael Novak. The least
thing I can do for him, for putting up with me. Give the guy a cookie, right?” Dean shrugs.

“Wow.” Sam hasn’t got words.

“Besides, you’d never guess it, but Cas is, like, the Groomzilla of the century. Fucking everything has to be perfect.” Dean widens his eyes and leans back a bit, holding his hands up, making a *Whoa-would-you-please-chill* expression. “I suggested Vegas and a case of beer. Did not go over well, I’ll tell you that.”

Luci laughs in malicious delight. Sam laughs too, but more in bemusement, still reeling from the name revelation.

“He has the whole thing planned out. Apparently, the colours for the wedding will be white, bright chartreuse, rhubarb, and aquamarine. And not just white-white. But he’s yet undecided if we’re gonna go with snow white, pearl white, or porcelain white.” Dean gives them a look that says ‘Oh, god. I’m marrying a madman. Please help?’ “And we’re getting married in a St. Saviour’s church, up in Bar Harbour, Maine of all places. Heh. Their slogan is ‘Deep peace to you’, which I ain’t getting until this ordeal is over.”

Sam grins. “You’re flying to the other end of the country to get married?”

“Yeah. I know, right?”

Sam suddenly feels Luci run a finger against his left ring finger, drawing an invisible band by the base over and over. When he looks down on his boyfriend he has this meaningful impish, yet hopeful expression. It makes his heart flutter and feel too big. “It’s only been four months, Luci,” he points out.

“Too soon?” Luci asks.

“Yeah. Too soon.”

Luci makes a whining sound and scrunches up his face like a petulant child not getting his will.

“We’re not even living together,” Sam argues in defense. (It’s true. On paper at least.) Part of him wants to be swept up in Luci’s mad dash over the the proverbial cliffside. Hell, just take off to Vegas and get hitched like Dean suggested to Cas. But he’s trying to be rational about this. One step at a time.

Luci sits up and leans his forehead against his temple, eyes all big and full of mischief. “Then let’s change that,” he suggests excitedly and wiggles his eyebrows. Sam grins and shoves him back down.

Dean had quieted down and watched the exchange with an amused smile on his lips. Now there’s the sound of a car outside and he snaps to attention. “Oh, shit. That might be Cas. Don’t tell him what I just told you,” he hastens to say before getting up and bringing the marinade to the kitchen.

One by one their friends show up, and, “like magic”, so does everything needed for a meal, that, “like magic”, cooks itself, including washing its dishes. While more drinks “magically” appears, and the dogs (Gabe and Kali brought theirs) “magically” walks themselves. Sam can’t remain seated not doing anything. He gets up and mingles, helping the magic happen. It gets pretty crowded with Wayne, Dean, Cas, Gabe, Kali, Jo, Sam and Luci all crammed around the living room table to eat (and three small opportunistic dogs hustling for scraps by their feet), but it works with the help of an extra chair from the kitchen and Luci’s office chair.
Luci remains in his corner of the four seat couch, only getting up to go to the bathroom. He’s mostly quiet, unless directly engaged in conversation by someone (except for Jo, whose very existence he ignores. Those two does not get along, so them not speaking is a good thing). He has this content little quirk to his lips, and warmth in his eyes, that remains all the time while people talk, laugh, and just ‘are’ around him. His beer is “magically” replaced when empty, food and dessert “magically” served, his plate cleared away and he just sits there in total relaxation and contentment. Sometime after dinner Lucy shows up, decides that Luci’s lap is a haven of calm in an ocean of cheerful chaos, and curls up in it to be petted while eyeing Kali’s dogs with slitted eyes. (After she’s done her ‘Make-Dean-sneeze’-ritual, naturally.)

There are three different conversations going on at the same time. Kali and Jo are discussing fishing, of all things, Cas is explaining some new surgical procedure to Sam and Wayne, and Gabe and Dean are in a heated argument about why the Chicago Blackhawks are superior. (By now they have it down to an artform, arguing while holding the same. fucking. opinion.) Luci is being a little shit, throwing in a stray question that will fuel the flames between Dean and Gabe any time they’re coming close to realise they’re on the same side, then leaning back and sniggering when the argument escalate again.

The door is suddenly flung open, startling them all and setting the dogs into a barking fest. Tumbling in comes a colourful winter clad figure (fur parkas and everything), followed by a bunch of ragtag bags that look like they’ve taken on the Tough Mudder all by themselves. “LUCI ARE YOU HOME I CAME AS SOON AS I COULD OH MY GOD I’VE BEEN SO WORRIED I—” the stream of words are cut off and the figure stop dead to gawk at them all. (They’re all gawking right back, except for the dogs who bounce around barking at the intruder.)

“Ch-Charlie?” Dean says, slightly stunned.

“Dean? What are you—?” Charlie asks dazedly.

The noise that escapes Luci can most closely be described as that of a wounded animal, as he throws himself out of the couch where he’s been hidden from Charlie’s view by Sam. He almost tips over the chair Gabe’s sitting on, in his rush to get to Charlie and throw his arms around her, clinging, burrowing his nose by her shoulder, pressing her so close breathing probably ceases to be a realistic option for her. “You came back. You came back. You came back. I thought I never see y—” it’s all he gets out before his voice cracks and his shoulders starts to shake.

Charlie holds on just as hard, head buried in Luci’s chest. She mumbles something in return, but they can’t hear what it is. A sob rips through Luci’s body. Then another one. It’s a flood gate opening, leading to him full on bawling into Charlie’s shoulder, rocking her back and forth. It’s impossible to see her face, but judging by her shaking, she isn’t in any better state.

Seeing Luci coming undone like this is heartbreaking. It’s years since they last saw each other, almost 14 months since they last spoke on the phone. It’s pure held back longing, grief, worry and fear, all paired up with relief and joy. Sam finds himself crying right along with the pair, throat closed up by a lump. One look at the others reveals he’s not the only one. Dean’s in the worst state, one hand covering almost all of his face, tears streaming from his eyes. But then again, Charlie is his best friend too, until Luci came into their lives. And he’s missed her, despite not being quite as close as Luci and Charlie appear to be.

It’s a bit awkward. It always is when someone is crying like that. But it’s okay, since it’s a happy moment. They wait it out, not wanting to disturb something so private.

It takes somewhere between five to ten minutes before the two finally step away from each other, drying tears, smiling. (They still hold onto each other with a hand on each other’s upper arms.)
“So… the new Lilith situation?” Charlie finally asks.

Luci grins at her and turns his head towards the couch. “Darling? Come meet my family.”

Sam knows Charlie already, but he still feels a bit bashful during the circumstances, as he gets up and makes his way towards them.

When Charlie realises who he is her eyes turns big as saucers. “Holy shit on a stick! Sam’s the Lilith situation? Oh my god, Luci, that’s awesome! You done so good!” With that Sam is pummeled with a big squeeze hug and can’t help but to laugh. Nerves that she wouldn’t think him good enough for Luci promptly dispelled. “Holy crap on a banana! Dean! That means we’re family for real now too!” Charlie exclaims with delight and abandons Sam’s to throw herself at Dean.

It takes a while for things to calm down and introductions to be made for those who don’t know Charlie. But soon they’re all settled in again. Charlie in Luci’s lap, and Sam tucked into Luci’s side, under his arm. Sam is expecting to feel a bit jealous, but he doesn’t. Luci just looks too fucking happy. They’re all teeming with curiosity, wanting to ask Charlie questions about her adventures. But the most pressing had been where she’d been during her radio silence.

“...So I had a bad breakup with this woman, Gilda. She was perfect. Well, not perfect. More like, dreamy and fairy like, you know? Anyway, she was married which she had failed to mention to me, not that I mind having clandestine affairs but I need to know it, if that’s the case.” Charlie talks a mile a minute. It’s fascinating how she does it without seeming to breathe between sentences. ‘Gotta know I play the second fiddle, you know? Starting a serious relationship with someone without telling them you’re already in one you’re not planning to leave? Not cool.”

“Damn straight!” Dean chimes in at the same time as Luci says “Hear ye, hear ye!”

Sam’s head snaps around to give Luci a sharp look. Luci smirks, but leans in and whispers “Don’t worry, darling. I promised I will never cheat on you, and I won’t,” as if he senses exactly what Sam had reacted to. It’s possible Luci had just agreed with the last sentence, but Sam can’t help but to worry he agreed with the whole not minding having clandestine affairs part too. It’s impossible to stop a nugget of jealous worry to form inside of him.

“...And she wouldn’t stop calling and texting. I just wanted to get away. Blocked her number and everything, but then she just called from other phones. It was so frustrating. I was set on going home to my Zucchini by then, but it kept driving me crazy how she wouldn’t just let me go. I decided to do one last stop before I came back. Somewhere I was guaranteed radio silence, you know? Until she got the hint and gave up. So I ended up going to Tibet, living in a Buddhist monastery in the mountains. It was hard at the beginning. Like really hard. You guys who don’t know me, I’m a… a… let’s call it a computer specialist,” Charlie says, making Luci chortle and hide his face in Sam’s shoulder.

Charlie smacks him on the arm. “Shut up. It’s not a lie,” she admonishes with a grin. Well. It isn’t. But hacker would be more apt. Sam finds himself grinning. “Anyway, there wasn’t a hint of reception for my phone, nor any internet available anywhere near. Which, for someone like me, is like losing one of my prime senses. But I figured, maybe this is my big quest? Maybe this is the big boss I have to conquer? So I stayed. Once every two months we made the trek down the mountain to restock. We went by foot and used llamas. On a particular plateau there was just the tiniest fraction of reception and I used to listen to my voicemail there, deleting everything from Gilda and listening to what Luci had to say. I could barely hear it, but it was a high point of my time. Then, about three and a half month ago I got a series of rather desperate messages from bae,” she says, a look at Luci shows who ‘bae’ is, “pleading for me to come home. I intended to rush home at once, but I still had to make the trek back up the mountain to get my stuff and passport. It
all went to shit then. We got hit by the snowstorm of the century. I’ve been snowed in for fucking months. The mountains were a veritable death trap until about a week ago. I hit civilisation this Thursday and I’ve tried calling you about a million times since then.” The last sentence is directed at Luci. “I was soo worried, Luce!”

Sam feels a pang of bad conscious. It was his idea for Luci to switch it off. Luci seems to have no such qualms. He just directs a shiteating grin at her. “Serves you right!”

“So how long will you be staying now?” Kali asks, sipping her drink.

“Forever. I’m never leaving again.”

Sam might love Luci just a little bit more for how his eyes fills with tears again at this revelation. He doesn’t know what this will mean to their relationship and future. It doesn’t matter. Not right now. He squeezes Luci’s hand. It will figure itself out somehow.

Chapter End Notes

As usual, Thank you to my wonderful, insightful Beta, Mizz_kitty21. It's doing me a world of good to have your help. ‘)"

Also, I was dumb enough to watch this video, amongst others, during my breaks while writing this piece of sugar. :P
Chapter Summary

Luci’s ecstatic about Charlie’s return. It brings a new set of problems, and he has a few that’s been brewing already...

Chapter Notes

Well folks, whatta ya know. I lied. I thought there was only two chapters left. I was wrong. We'll see how many it takes to wrap it up.

Here's the deal. You have it all planned out. But characters tend to get their own life once you start writing. They don't always do what I think they'll do, or think what I plan them to think. Hence, we're looking at maybe four chapters for a complete wrap up, instead of two. These two insecure fuckers are currently driving me insane!

Also, I'm super grateful for my wonderful Beta, Mizz_Kitty21 for putting a spotlight on things I miss, thus making things less confusing.

Baptism By Fire

All's Fair in Love and War

Lucifer lies on his stomach in bed beside Sam. He’s squirreled away the bowl of cherries Jo brought, along with an empty bowl he put on his bedside table. The cherries are in front of him and Sam is sitting against the headboard with his arms crossed, watching him with an expression of mixed fondness and utter defeat, a lá he’s-a-pig-yet-somehow-I-still-love-him. Luci twists the stalk of another cherry, pops it into his mouth, chews the meat of the pit, then turns his head and spits the pit towards to bowl on the bedside table with an audible *Pffohh*. The pit lands with a *ping* where it’s supposed to go, but bounces out and falls to the floor.

“I’m not cleaning that up,” Sam says redundantly, lip curling up in distaste as he looks towards the pit bowl. Most of the pits had gone into the bowl, but not necessarily stayed there.

“Oh, relax, sweetheart. Nobody’s expecting you to. Here, have a cherry. See if you can hit.” Luci twists the stalk off of another one and reaches up to push the cherry into Sam’s mouth as he opens it to decline.

Luci’s whole body is buzzing with energy. This might actually be one of the happiest days of his life so far. It’s 2 AM and the can hear the muted buzz of conversation, occasional punctuated by a round of laughter, coming from the living room. Dean and Cas are staying the night in the fold out couch, and Charlie is out there with them. It wouldn’t surprise him if the three of them are still doing tequila shots. The bottle had been brought forth after the rest of their friends had left.
Charlie is home, and this magnificent—albeit at times rather prissy—creature, with beauty of mythological proportions, is here in bed with him, because he wants to. Baffling. Truly.

Sam sputters and scowls. “I’m not gonna spit pits across half a bed, Luci,” he protests while he chews.

“One. Fine.” Luci holds his cupped hand against Sam’s chin. “Give it to me.” Sam does.

One would think he’d have learned better by now.

Luci pops Sam’s pit into his mouth as soon as it lands in his hand, then turns his head and spits it towards the bowl.

*ping*

“Bull’s Eye!” Luci declares smugly.

“Luci!”

Luci sniggers at Sam’s indignant expression and pops another cherry into his mouth. “It’s okay. Not everybody can spit with the accuracy of a cobra, Samwise,” he says with a mocking smirk.

“You think I can’t hit?”

Luci’s stomach flip flops excitedly as Sam gets that stubborn offended expression. Getting Sam riled up is definitely on his top ten list of things he likes to do. Making him laugh might be a solid two on that list. But mock arguing and coaxing his competitive sides into wakefulness like now is great fun. He shrugs, keeping his face indifferent. “It’s nothing to be ashamed of. It’s not like it’s a useful skill, so it doesn’t matter that you don’t have it,” he says in a consolidating tone, pops two cherries in at once, gnaws the meat off and...

*ping* *ping*

“I don’t want to do it because it’s disgusting, Lucifer. It’s not because I can’t.”

Luci pulls down the corners of his lips, his brows, and nods, all but screaming ‘Yeah, sure. If that’s what you need to tell yourself…’

Sam glares at him. Luci fights the urge to throw his head back and cackle when Sam reaches out and determinately twists the stalk from a cherry, pops it in his mouth to chew the meat off, then with a defiant look twists his head and spits towards the bowl.

He misses, the pit landing on bed.

Luci’s lips twitch in amusement. He raises an eyebrow in a silent ‘I told you so’.

“Unlucky shot,” Sam mutters and takes another cherry. This time he focuses more before he spits the pit, hitting the outside of the bowl. “What the—! Third time’s the charm.”

Luci sniggers in delight as Sam shifts from slightly disgusted but tolerant, into full I-can-do-this-even-if-it’s-the-last-thing-I-do mode. Sam keeps at it until he’s hit trice. Just to tease him, Luci nails one last pit before he rolls to the side to put the cherries away and collect the pits that haven’t landed in the bowl. When those are taken care of he rolls back and faceplants in Sam’s belly, blowing a raspberry that makes Sam squeal, laugh and shove him off.

“God. Luci, I love you, but you’re a total menace,” Sam says, chuckling, flashing those dimples
that makes Luci’s breath catch.

“Why?”

“Why what? Why you’re a menace? Or why do I love you?”


Only, it isn’t really a joke. Sam’s out of his league. One day he’ll wake up, realise he’s wasting his time on someone like Luci. When that day comes he’ll leave, and Luci will still be here, wasting away in the ruins of his shattered heart. It will happen and Luci intends to get as much out of this as he can while it lasts.

Sam chuckles and scoots down from his sitting position to lie beside Luci instead. He grabs Luci’s cheeks and pulls him in for a soft kiss. “You want it in writing?” he asks with that adorable lopsided smile of his.

“Mmhm,” Luci agrees.

“I don’t know, Luce. That’s a whole lot of writing I need to do,” Sam says, feigning a morose expression.

“How many pages are we talking about?”

Sam strokes his chin, pretending to think about it. “Arial, font size 10? Eight hundred at least.”

“In that case you’ve got next week’s work all cut out for you,” Luci smirks.

But really. Sam does it already. Stopping his heart at regular intervals when he least expects it, using fucking post-it notes. He’s corrupting Luci, turning him into a mushy sap. By now his heart speeds up if he just sees a post-it amongst his stuff. He kind of hates how he sometimes get all choked up when he gets them. Hates how much power Sam holds over his emotions.

Sam kisses him again, slow and indulgent. And this is the thing about life. It’s fucking scary. This high, it won’t last forever. You know that. Sam’s a drug that feels good and right and home in almost every way. He’ll hurt Luci, even if they by some wonder stay together. Hell, he does it already on a regular basis, without even knowing. At the same time Sam makes him so happy it makes up for the much lesser pain. He wants Sam to stick by his side through the vicissitudes of life. even if it’s going to mean pain and heartbreak along the way. There’s even a small part of him that wants to never let go of Sam even if the unimaginable should happen and he himself should grow tired of Sam. And that’s just a pointless and frankly, kind of mean wish. But then again, he can’t ever imagine a day when he won’t want Sam.

Sam breaks the kiss with a soft smile and laces his fingers together behind his head, looking up at Luci, who’s still on his stomach, supporting himself on his elbows. “Aren’t you tired? Today must have been such an emotionally draining day for you,” Sam asks.

Luci tilts his head and scrutinizes the open empathy on display on Sam’s face, and on impulse, decides to be honest. “Hmm. Yes. I’ll make a confession. For the last year I’ve been convinced Charlie was dead. I didn’t know how to handle that, so I’ve kept calling her, on the off-chance that she wasn’t. Hoping, that by doing so, it wouldn’t be true. So yes, today’s been draining, but also revitalizing. And I don’t really want to fall asleep as long as I can hear Charlie, Dean, and Cas awake, alive, and happy, in the living room.” Just talking about it makes his skin crawl in unease. Since Charlie’s home he can say it out loud. He won’t accidentally jinx it and make her death true by putting words to the fear. Another round of laughter heard through the wall and closed door just proves that. Nevertheless, the secondhand pain in Sam’s eyes makes him cringe.
He sees Sam open his mouth to speak and promptly covers his mouth with a hand. “Don’t speak. Talking about these feelings is really hard for me. I don’t like to feel this vulnerable and naked. So if you want me to keep talking you don’t speak. Okay? Do you want me to go on?”

Sam nods.

Luci doesn’t want to talk about this at all. He’s trying to trust Sam with feelings he doesn’t even trust himself to handle. It’s a fair trade, considering everything Sam has told him. But he cares jack shit for fairness. All he knows is that he’s never felt less alone in his life than he does right now. If he’s ever going to confess to this, it’s during this perfect moment in time. “I feared she was dead, or worse. That I’d get another letter like…” he rolls away from Sam, to his bedside table, opens the drawer and carefully removes the false bottom. He takes out the old envelope containing the biggest heartbreak of his life, and rolls back to lie on his stomach beside Sam. He holds out the envelope to Sam. “Another letter like this. I haven’t even let Charlie read this…” he adds when Sam takes it.

He can’t look at Sam as Sam sits up and removes Michael’s letter from its envelope. The letter is dirty and stained from being read so many times. Luci hates that Sam will realise that the splotches where the ink has run is caused by tears. He regrets the impulse to share this already. It’s a mistake. A stupid, stupid mistake.

He knows the words on the two pages by heart, but all in all it could be summed up like ‘I love you more than you will ever know, but not enough to deem it worth it to fight to keep you in my life. Not enough not to abandon you.’

And if Michael could express such great love and still let him go without a fight, then so could Charlie, so could Dean, and so could Sam. If Charlie had died it would have torn him to pieces, but death comes to everyone. Abandonment is a choice. One Luci himself had made when his father had forced him to choose between his integrity, and being counted as his father’s son. Granted, he hadn’t counted on his father forcing Michael to choose between the two of them, when he made his choice.

He still would have made the same choice if he’d known. Threats and blackmail doesn’t work well on him.

He looks down on his hands, scrapes imaginary dirt from under his fingernails, waiting for Sam to finish reading. Charlie came back. Charlie traversed the fucking Himalayas by foot to come home to him. Yes, indeed. He was emotional about it. Who the fuck wouldn’t be?

A sniffle makes Luci look up to see Sam with a hand tightly pressed over his mouth and nose, eyes all red and filled with tears as he reads. Bless his too big heart and great capacity to empathize with others’ feelings. Definitely a mistake to let him read it. But it’s easier than talking. Sam had asked him so many times about his family. Told him he’d listen if Luci wanted to talk. He doesn’t want to talk, but Sam wants to listen. So there it is. Sam gets to see it, and they’ll never need to bring it up ever again.

Sam finally lowers the letter and looks down on Luci. He looks so fucking heartbroken, and Luci can’t fucking deal with that. He takes the letter and envelope from Sam’s lax hands and sits up, turning his back towards Sam. “Oh, stow it,” he says in annoyance. “Blow your nose and get over it. I did.”

*I’ll never get over it.*

He takes his time folding the letter, putting it back into the envelope, then returning to its place under the false bottom of the drawer, giving Sam time to collect himself. He hears Sam take a
napkin and blow his nose. When he turns around Sam has laid back down and is rubbing at his eyes. Seeing Luci looking at him, he gives Luci a close-lipped smile that could only be described as brave, paired with those sad puppy eyes. Luci lies back down on his stomach, drying Sam’s cheeks with a hand. “Sometimes, when my phone flashes an unknown number, I still get that naïve flutter of hope, that it will be Michael on the other end. It never is and it never will be. But if it was I’d forgive him in a heartbeat.” He sighs. “But I don’t want to talk about this, so please, never bring it up.”

He bends down to kiss Sam’s forehead, temple, and those tearstreaked cheeks, trying to soothe the pain he caused by showing him the letter. “Today is a good day, darling. Charlie didn’t die or abandon me. She’s back. The box is opened and the cat’s alive,” he tells Sam.

Sam manages a weak chuckle at the Schrödinger’s cat reference.

Luci kisses his eyelids, forcing him to close his eyes, shielding Luci from all those emotions they reflect. “One day it might be you sending me that letter. Hopefully it won’t happen any time soon. So for now, let’s just be happy.”

Sam opens his eyes and frowns, putting a hand on Luci’s chest to hold him on far enough distance to be able to look him square in the eyes. “I’ll never abandon you, Lucifer,” he says as if he really believes it.

“They’re only one reason to keep your boat tethered to the dock—and that’s so you’ll be able to get off easily. It’s okay. It’s how the story goes. But not today. Today he gets to have it all. So he heaves himself up on top of Sam, distracting him with hands and friction, until Sam no longer has anything but pleasure on his mind. Today Sam belongs to him. He bites down on Sam’s upper arm, sucking a mark inside the ring left by his teeth—a mark of ownership that makes his nostrils flare and awakens something animalistic beneath his ribcage. Sam hisses from the pain of it. He stares at the mark, and then at Luci for a beat, irises drowned in the black of his pupils. Then he taps his pec with an urgent finger. “Another one. Here.”

Luci growls in satisfaction, digging his teeth into the firm muscle indicated. Then into another spot Sam points at.

Today is the best day, when Sam pleads to be marked up and owned, letting him bite, suck and dig his fingers in to bruise hips, rendering them to nothing but base instincts and wants. It satisfies Luci to no end that Sam seems to forget everything but what they’re doing. That he’s louder than ever, making it impossible for their friends in the other room to miss the sound of bodies slapping together, of the headboard banging, and most importantly, of Sam moaning and crying out Luci’s name.

He is woken by Sam stirring. Memories of yesterday comes back to him with a little happy thrill. He opens his eyes, just tiny little slits, trying not to give away that he’s awake. Sam’s sitting, stretching and yawning, full of marks all over his torso. Marks he had asked for (save the first one). Fuck, but that really stirs things to life in Luci. He still looks at that picture Sam sent him with the slap mark sometimes, marvelling at how he gets turned on by it because it’s his mark, even if it’s just in a denotative sense, rather than literal. They haven’t brought up what they did through texting again after Sam’s initial freak out, back in the beginning. But he thinks they might have to talk about it soon. Or talk about their sexlife in general. Because up until now they’ve
been busy getting to know each other sexually, but there has been a couple of instances of angry sex that has come perilously close to skirting the border of dubious consent, at least in his eyes. He would have held himself back, once it got rougher, had it not been for their shared texting fantasies. Angry or not, there were limits you didn’t cross without discussing it first, when you cared for your partner.

Sam seemed to have no such qualms, and had provoked him to go on. And fucking fuck! Angry sex with Sam is good. Judging by how deliriously happy Sam had seemed afterwards this is a shared opinion.

There is nothing dubious about yesterday’s consent. However, it got rough. He’d found himself wanting to go rougher still, but held back, because testing the limits in the primal state they’d been in isn’t just stupid—it’s lunacy.

So it’s time.

Through his lashes he sees Sam look down on his body, touch a couple of the marks with questing fingers, bite his lower lip and grin, unaware he’s being watched.

Definitely time.

Luci has a worry about today though, and the time waiting ahead. He had deliberately not thought about it yesterday, choosing to just enjoy the moment while it lasted. Charlie and his relationship might be a hard pill to swallow for Sam. He wonders how he’ll take it. It’s one thing to be told ‘We’re close. Closer than most people ever get unless romantically involved.’ It’s something completely else to come face to face with it. Queerplatonic, Charlie calls it.

For a moment he considers stop feigning sleep and have a talk about it with Sam. He decides against it. Instead he’ll let Sam discover what it’s like by his own. Seeing it, and figuring out what it’s like to live under the same roof as Charlie. Baptism by fire.

Maybe Sam can’t handle it, won’t stand for it. He wouldn’t be the first.

*We’ll cross that bridge when we get to it.*

Sam gets out of bed carefully, as to not wake Luci up. He puts on sweatpants and a long sleeved tee, covering any visible marks up, before leaving Luci’s view, and consecutively, the room. Luci lies listening, trying to figure out if anyone else is awake.

“Gaaah! Oh my god! Charlie! There’s a lock on the bathroom door for a reason.” Sam’s voice is startled and flustered.

“Yeah, but how are you guys supposed to use the toilet if it’s locked, huh? Frack! You scared the bejeebies outta me!” Charlie replies, voice upset.

“I can’t pee while you’re in the bathtub!”

Luci can practically hear Charlie’s exaggerated eyeroll. He hears the sound of the shower curtain being pulled, then Charlie says “How about now?”

He turns his head into the pillow and laughs silently, his whole body shaking with mirth.

*Baptism through fire, indeed.*

When Luci finally stirs, the bathroom is empty. Mikey comes to greet him when he leaves the
bedroom, but hurries back to the kitchen as soon as he’s said hello. Before entering the bathroom he catches part of a conversation coming from the kitchen.

“Dean. Move your fat ass, that’s my spot,” Sam says.

“Awww. Luci gave up his spot for you? He must really love you! That’s so sweet,” Charlie (the traitor) says.

Luci closes the door to the bathroom, cutting out the conversation. Sam doesn’t need to know that. And Luci doesn’t need to know that Sam gets to know these things. The fact that Charlie said it out loud means she roots for them, and Sam has gained an ally on the inside, just like Luci has Dean. It’s supposedly a great thing. Charlie usually tolerates his partners at best, but rarely deems them ‘worthy of him’. In fact, this may be a first. That’s both scary and thrilling. He’d fist pump if he didn’t have to fight down the flare of panic at the thought of Sam getting *Understanding the Secret Thoughts of Lucifer for Dummies* from Charlie.

He goes about his morning routine, takes a shower, brushes his teeth, gets dressed, then heads for the kitchen to join the others. He can hear them talking about Sam and Lucifer’s get together story. It’s a good thing that Sam can laugh about it nowadays. Even Dean’s scheming parts.

He comes into the kitchen just as Dean says “Yeah, but all's fair in love and war, right?”

“I call bullshit to that statement,” Luci cuts in straight away.

Their kitchen has never been so crowded before. The maximum they've been around the table before is four, and even that is usually pushing it as the square table normally is pushed up against the wall. Now it's been pulled out and the extra chair has been brought from Charlie’s room, where it usually serves as a ditching space for clothes.

Lucy is on the floor, eating daintily from her bowl, Mikey sits beside Dean, begging like a pro. Cas sits in the place between the wall and the table, sporting a spectacular bedhead, nursing a coffee with hunched shoulders, and wearing a tired death glare directed into thin air, warning anyone from trying to communicate with him directly. Sam's sitting in Luci’s old spot, between Cas and Dean. There’s currently only one available chair as Charlie’s standing by the coffee machine.

Luci walks up to her, slides an arm around her midriff and brushes a kiss to her temple. She smiles and hands him a cup of coffee and a plate of ready made sandwiches. He'd almost forgot about that habit of hers, to make him breakfast if she’s awake first.

“Oh yeah? And why's that?” Dean asks.

Luci carries his plate to the table, sitting himself down on Sam's lap, thus leaving Charlie the remaining seat. He’s well aware that Sam was watching his interaction with a carefully neutral expression. He doles out a kiss on Sam’s temple too, and another one on his cheek, noting in satisfaction how Sam’s lip curves up in a little smile. His whole approach to this is to act as if everything is as it should be, and people will take it as such. It works well on everything, except jealous partners. But maybe it will this time, since Sam knows Charlie from before. Sam slides an arm around him to keep him steady while he turns towards Dean to answer the question and start in on his sandwiches. “Because that expression implies that there are no laws, or rules, to dictate war. There are. And a shitton of them to boot. The Geneva conventions ring any bells? They’re not always adhered to, by all means, but the offenders are punished.”

Charlie comes to sit down on the remaining chair. “Yeah, but love. In love all’s fair at least.”
Luci chews his sandwich, having taken a huge bite in a vain hope to finish both before Lucy finishes her food and comes to scavenge on the table. He takes a sip of his coffee trying to get his mouth empty faster, and shakes his head. ‘No. Not if we’re talking about true love. Like Machiavelli said, love and fear cannot coexist. So if you want somebody to love you, you need to play by a certain set of rules too. True devotion cannot be forced. If you force your competition out of the way, you’re not pursuing a lover, you’re pursuing a hostage. That’s not love.’

“So you’re the ‘if you love somebody, set them free’-type, huh?” Dean says, making air quotes.

Sam nuzzles Luci’s neck, kissing it—as always, giving him goosebumps. “I suppose I am. And sometimes you’re lucky and they come back.” Luci agrees and throws a cheeky wink at Charlie who grins back at him. Sam’s arm tightens around him minutely, hand fanning out. Yes. This could become a problem.

He considers how Sam’s grip had shifted from supportive to possessive and thinks that maybe it could be a good thing too. It’s an improvement to Sam’s daily rejections, always with one foot out the door. It goes against what he just said about the rules of love. And really, if Sam’s jealous of Charlie, it will be a problem since he wants them both in his life. But maybe if Sam thinks he has to fight to keep Luci, he won’t be so inclined to say no to every progress in their relationship. He puts that thought on the backburner for now. He doesn’t want Sam to feel insecure about his affections either. It all requires some thought.

“Luci, my computers are horribly outdated. My skills are horribly outdated! I need new gear,” Charlie says, changing the subject. He can see she’s gearing up to do the Power Pout. Completely unnecessary of course.

“We’ll fix it. You want home delivery or go out shopping?”

“Shopping of course! I haven’t seen modern civilisation for years. I wanna go out and bask in it.”

Luci sniggers. At least Charlie hasn’t got a problem with the whole what’s-mine-is-yours schtick. Sam’s constant refusal to let Luci spend money on him is driving him crazy. As long as he buys stuff that benefits the both of them, Sam reluctantly tolerates it. Like paying for their food while eating out, or buying stuff for the house. But anything personally bought for Sam himself is refused unless it’s cheap.

To an extent, Luci gets it. He does. Sam’s proud. He wants to be able to provide for himself. And Luci loves his pride. Sam’s poor by choice. He’s chosen his morals before riches. He could earn a lot of money if he switched firms and took other cases. But he has integrity. Luci likes that.

Having said that, Sam has also chosen to date a millionaire. And that comes with perks.

Perks Sam doesn’t want.

No matter how much he tries to convince Sam that no gifts come with strings attached, Sam doesn’t want what he wants to give. And that fucking hurts. Because the only reason he can see for the stubborn refusal, coming from someone with such rigid morals as Sam, is the unwillingness to be in debt to Luci when he leaves him. A debt that’s all in his head to boot.

It’s a bit contradictory, that Luci dislikes that he’s normally pursued only by people who want him for his money and power, but he takes serious enjoyment in spoiling them. To see that excited gleam in their eyes when he gives them something they coveted. In fact, the enjoyment he got from putting a new diamond (or any kind of) necklace around a woman’s neck is almost perverse in its magnitude. He’d go as far as to call it a non-sexual fetish. It was just something about clipping it on and see the little hitch in their breath, along with the hand coming up to touch it
almost reverently as they watch themselves in the mirror.

Now Sam, he’s being stupid about it all. Since he’s trying to deal with his depression, the one thing that is vital to anyone—is to get rid of as many emotional pressure points as possible. Like bad economy. For most people it isn’t possible to just remove debt with a snap of their fingers. But Sam could. So much of his underlying anxiety would go away in the blink of the eye if he just let Luci pay of his stupid mortgage. Bela’s penthouse had cost ten times as much and hadn’t even put a dent in Luci’s wallet.

“You want company?” Dean asks Charlie while sneaking a piece of cheese under the table. Like nobody would notice. Hah!

Dean on the other hand is coming around to the idea that he can point at whatever he wants and Luci will be delighted to give it to him. Luci has also discovered that shopping with Dean fulfills that little spot inside of him that warms up from sharing his fortune, even if they don’t actually buy anything. When Dean came along to help him pick out a new couch, Dean had asked what budget they had, Luci had simply handed him his AMEX Centurion with a smirk and a raised eyebrow. Dean had lit up like the proverbial child at Christmas at the sight of the black card. After that Dean had gone through the store, taking enthusiastic pseudo-ownership of things. He had excitedly tried furniture, talked about where they’d put it (be it at Dean’s or Luci’s), then gone on and described what it would be like owning it. Like the ‘awesome’ carpet that he loved, but that he’d end up tripping over, spilling coffee on, and then get mad at not being able to get the stains off. Or the coffee table, that Cas would ruin in his refusal to use coasters. Or the big ugly glass clown that he imagined getting just to see Sam cringe every time he came over, but he’d regret getting because Sam would stop coming.

Dean had stopped by anything that caught his interest, looked at Luci and asked ‘Can we get this?’, after getting an affirmative he lit up gleefully, just in that way that made Luci so happy. After Dean mentally pretending to buy it, he didn’t want it, but the shared joy had been gotten already. Dean loved the idea of being able to buy anything, rather than actually wanting to own stuff.

The exception had been the recliners. They were of the super comfortable kind with a number of special effects built into them. Dean talked about how he and Sam always wanted something like it, from the moment they got their first apartment. It was a great buy, since both brothers would sit in them any chance they got. Sam only used the couch if Luci was in it, and guarded ‘his’ recliner like a territorial wolf.

The conversation goes on around Luci while he drifts in his thoughts, answering absentmindedly as he eats his breakfast, then leans into the comfortable warmth of Sam’s chest. It’s decided that Charlie, Dean, and Sam will go out shopping. (Dean bullies Sam into joining them.) Cas and Luci will (sadly) stay at home, since Cas would like to try his hand at harvesting one of Luci’s hives. Luci prays it will go well for Sam to spend the day with Charlie. All in all, it’s good.
Sam is trying to come to terms with what it means to be living with Charlie and Luci, and how it changes things for him. It kind of blinds him to another problem brewing underneath.

It’s weird. Sam really likes Charlie. He does, and always did. She’s one big ball of positivity. But he can’t help but feel a bit left out. Luci and she has a lot of private jokes, and communicates with the help of a single glance at times. (Sam and Dean does that too. That’s not the point.) They bicker like siblings. They’re very affectionate with each other, physically, like siblings are not. It feels like… like Charlie is Luci’s girlfriend. Yeah. That’s it. It’s like coming home one day to find that your boyfriend’s got a girlfriend and she’s moved in. And Luci acts like it’s the most natural thing in the world when she cuddles up under his arm in the couch, they spontaneously hug, or he greets her with a nuzzling or a kiss on the temple. It’s kind of rough for Sam.

Thing is, it doesn’t lessen the affection or care Luci shows him. Not a bit.

Luci had tried to explain, back before Charlie came back. But no story starting with “Charlie and I…” could really prepare him for this.

Charlie is as lesbian as they come. If she hadn’t been, Sam had not been able to take it. He just doesn’t know how to act, or how to feel. The first week he tries to give them some space, so they can catch up. He goes home instead of going to Luci’s. That backfires because Luci just comes to him, leaving Charlie alone in the house. That’s just stupid, and not what he wanted. He likes Luci’s home much better than he does his own by now. His own house seems kind of dead. He can feel the depressive thoughts crawling in the walls. He used to love it so much. Now… when he looks around he sees Sarah’s taste in everything. The furniture, the art on the walls, the colour of the towels… It’s classy, but it isn’t him. How come he never noticed that before? The only room that’s really him, is his office. The room that is Charlie’s room in Luci’s house. And even that is drab since it’s designed to work in, not to live in. And yet, Luci comes over.

Sam thinks a lot about the letter Luci let him read. He thinks about how alike their stories are, despite the difference. Sam was kicked out because he refused to bend to dad’s will. Luci left by himself for the same reason. Dean had chosen to follow Sam, despite how that would mean homelessness, hunger, and a shitload of trouble. Michael had chosen duty and obedience before the love he held for Luci, despite choosing his brother would still mean a stable economy and a bright future.

The letter had been so full of heartbreak. Michael’s, as well as Luci’s—it hurts to think about it.

It’s the letter, really, that has Sam making his mind up to really give it a shot to make it work with Charlie. He’d said he’d never abandon Luci, and by withdrawing he feels like he’s making it a lie,
even if it’s unintended.

Charlie’s homecoming has changed a lot.

Apart from the obvious, like female hygiene products in the bathroom (along with yet another huge bath towel - a bright orange one with the text ‘Also Hers’ on), and a new kitchen table with six chairs that makes the kitchen kind of cramped, but that’s okay—the real changes is general living.

Charlie doesn’t lock the bathroom door. “So what? I’m a lesbian.” Yeah, okay. But that doesn’t make her less naked, less female, or, or, less naked. How the hell is he supposed to tinkle with a naked girl in the bathtub, huh? Or how’s he supposed to take a shower while she’s sitting there tinkling?

Luci and his sexlife moves into the bedroom for the greater part. Luci doesn’t seem to give jack shit if Charlie comes home and finds them going at it on the couch/kitchen/wherever, but Sam is not that eager to perform in front of an audience. Bad enough that they can be heard... Honestly, it isn’t much of a problem for Sam to be heard. Not really. He lived with Dean for so long that adjusting to a full house feels quite natural in that department. However, quickies get more frequent. “They’ll be home in ten minutes. Think we can make it before then?” (The extra added edge of the risk of being caught is actually quite a turn on.)

Dean all but moves in. With Sam here along with his two best friends, he comes over even more frequently than before. And as annoying as it is, Sam finds it both comforting and relaxing. Cas comes over just like he used to when Sam was living in his own home.

Sam has no problem with a full house. He’s grown up living on top of others—sharing motel rooms with Dean, sleeping in the Impala, then in small apartments where Dean or he brought friends over. There’s a familiarity to it all. He has no problem shutting off outer disturbances and focus on what he’s doing, or, in worst case scenarios, just get up, go into the bedroom and close the door. He knows how to be by himself even when he’s not alone. If anything, he finds the chaos grounding. If he thinks about it, he’s kind of missed it, ever since he and Dean moved to their own apartments. He hadn’t even been aware of that.

Luci is the one who has a bit of a problem adjusting. Mostly, he seems very satisfied with the frequent social chaos. But he’ll get ‘overloaded’ at times, especially if he’s doing work from home. He’ll snap into full pissbaby, and order anybody that “can’t keep their goddamned mouth shut” out of the room. Nobody takes offense though. Dean and Charlie will shut themselves in, in her room, or head out. Cas will gladly pay Wayne a visit if he’s there, and Sam, well he can keep his mouth shut.

Sam’s problems are all centered around Luci and Charlie’s closeness. He finds himself being jealous.

“You’re in my spot.” Sam doesn’t mean to sound as sharp and hostile as he does. Nor did he plan to square his shoulders and lift his chin like he’s doing.

Great. Now I’m challenging a small lesbian girl for cuddle rights. What are we? Animals?

Charlie and Luci look up from where they sit curled up together in the couch, watching Doctor Who. Charlie gives him a smile and scoots from under Luci’s arm. “Only keeping it warm for ya,” she says and winks. Luci is wearing a totally neutral expression that Sam knows means he is hiding his feelings very carefully.
Sam sits down on the couch beside Luci, who promptly throws his arm around him and tugs him close. Sam tucks his legs up on the couch and makes himself comfortable. Doctor Who might not be his thing, but Luci is, and he’ll be damned if he’s going to be chased off by a—

Charlie breaks his train of thoughts by scooting back and very decisively lifting his arm, snuggling in under it.

_Ooooookay._

Luci makes that very low, barely audible, purring noise that Sam loves, because it speaks of utter contentment.

_Right. This is normal._

_Totally normal._

Sam isn’t exactly relaxed. He’s quite tense, actually. But the two people he’s cuddled between seem utterly content, keeping their eyes on the screen.

It’s not like he haven’t hugged Charlie lots of times before, back when he only knew her as Dean’s best friend. She is a hugger. But this? He’s not sure how to feel about it.

It’s not unpleasant.

In fact, when he lets himself relax a bit, and stops waiting for some big plot line or scheme to be revealed, it’s quite nice. He relaxes further, and adjusts his arm around Charlie to lie more comfortably, then tries to catch up on what’s happening on screen.

After a little while, Luci turns his head and whispers “Thank you,” quietly in his ear. And maybe, as long as Charlie isn’t standing between him and Luci, he can deal with this.

It’s far from friction free, living together. Apart from appropriating Sam’s boyfriend, Charlie has a set of habits. Her morning baths are only a problem during weekends, because she is not a morning person. She’s a bit of a player, and starts to bring home hot chicks who thinks it’s okay to wander around scantily clad in the night/morning. Sam does _not_ appreciate half naked women prancing around in front of Luci. Although, Luci is shockingly mean to them the morning after, unlike how he is when they come in with Charlie in the evening (if he and Sam are still up and about when they come).

The third time it happens, Sam catches why. He has his jealousy to thank for that. The blonde that putters around in the kitchen that morning, is drop dead gorgeous. On top of looking like a Playmate, she’s only wearing thin white cotton panties and a heathered grey shirt hanging off her shoulder, cut off to reveal her waist. She looks like _S-E-X_. Sam doesn’t know where to look, and flusters a “Good morning.” Getting a way too flirty smile in return, along with an equally too meaningful once over. She is Charlie’s one night stand/girlfriend/whatever and should not be flirting so openly with him. He’s got a boyfriend!

She looks like a wet dream to him. He can’t really blame _her_ for the perverted thoughts his brain supplies him with, yet he still feels accosted, since he’s newly awake, and in his (Luci’s!) home. It’s supposed to be a safe space. The sexy outfit he can handle, it’s the flirtiness he has problems with. She’s about to sit down and he snaps “That’s my spot.” It comes out just as testily as he feels about it.

“Sorry. I didn’t know.”
“It’s okay,” he says and sits down with his coffee, trying not to look at her. He’s vastly uncomfortable. He’s never been comfortable with Dean’s hookups either, back when they were living together. He had no problem with it during the night, but the morning after? He felt intruded upon.

Charlie comes in and the blonde gets up and hugs her, kisses her, and starts talking about what they’re going to do today, if Charlie wants to go to the carnival with her next week, and whatever. Sam tries not to listen as they sit down.

But then Luci comes into the kitchen, dressed in his running outfit, and Sam feels a hot ball of jealousy in his stomach—because if he himself thinks the girl looks like a pay-per-view, Luci must find her equally attractive. Especially now, when the girl is standing on her knees on the chair, leaned over the table to talk to Charlie, supporting herself with her elbows and arching her back—putting her ass on display. White panties almost see through with how thin they are and Christ!

Sam feels ashamed over the things he’s thinking. Women are supposed to be respected and not a single one of his thoughts are respectful. They either involve pulling those panties aside or throwing the girl out, nose first, for disrespecting him.

The jealousy is what has him studying Luci’s reactions closely and (he hopes) covertly. Luci’s face is unreadable when he spots the girl. His eyes flick to Charlie—and this is what Sam missed the two times before—the two have a silent conversation with their eyes and miniscule expression changes.

He leans in and gives Charlie a peck on the forehead and a squeeze on the shoulder, walks around the table, and sits down next to Sam, completely ignoring the blonde. He entwines his fingers with Sam’s and leans in to give him a very demonstrative kiss. Then he addresses Charlie with an annoyed expression. “I knew you were horny, C, but I never expected you to bring home whores,” he says and gives the blonde a look full of disdain.

Whoa. That’s rude!

Sam is shocked by the mean statement, and judging by the blonde’s gasp, so is she. “I’m not a whore!”

“No? You sure look like it.” The level of disdain Luci radiates has gone up a notch. “What’s your name? Kelly? Candy? No, wait. Don’t tell me, it’s Jewel, isn’t it.”

The blonde has been gaping at him, looking like she’s trying to get a word in, but upon hearing Jewel her mouth closes and she just looks hurt.

Sam tenses up, about to come to her defense, but Luci squeezes his hand so hard it hurts under the table—a silent warning to keep his mouth shut—and to his own shame, he does.

“Jewel, it’s not that I find any fault with beautiful girls working their assets,” Luci says to the blonde, in a slightly consolidating tone. “But I don’t want to see it in my house, or see you flaunt yourself over the kitchen table like you do. The kitchen is for eating in, so this—“ he gestures at her with a hand and curls his lip in distaste, “—is frankly disgusting.”

It’s not even true. Luci and he has gone at it in the kitchen a number of times without Luci batting an eyelash.

Jewel, if that is her name, sits back on her heels and holds her arms around her chest and belly in a futile try to cover up. She stare at him sullenly, cheeks turning pink in shame or anger. Charlie
remains conspicuously quiet, looking down at her hands. Sam’s pulse is skyrocketing, caught up in a very uncomfortable situation and a maelstrom of mixed emotions. Mixed, since moments ago he’d felt threatened by Jewel, made uneasy by her flirting, and wanted to throw her out. But now she’s hurt and it’s his boyfriend doing the hurting, telling him to keep quiet, going against his instincts to stand up to bullies. He’s ashamed to keep his mouth shut, and yet he does.

Luci’s not done with the blonde yet. He digs up his wallet out of his pocket. “Here,” he says, takes out a bunch of 100$ bills from his wallet and puts them on the table in front of Jewel. “Take these, get dressed, and get yourself out of my house pronto.”

Jewel stares down at the money, her breathing visibly speeding up. It must be at least 1000$ in the pile. Sam can actually feel the inner argument she’s having as pride wars with greed, and perhaps, need. (Who knows what her financial situation looks like?) She looks up at Charlie who won’t meet her eyes, looks at Sam, who possibly looks as wide eyed as she does. Luci makes an impatient noise and adds another 500 to the pile. “Take the money and leave. Now,” he says with a dangerous edge to his voice.

Jewel presses her lips together to a thin line and averts her eyes, then she takes the money and hurries out of the kitchen, head bowed and eyes downcast. Sam opens his mouth to speak but Luci gives his hand another squeeze (soft this time) and silently says “Not yet.”

The kitchen is silent and tense while they wait. As soon as the entrance door is opened and closed, and they can see Jewel hurry away outside, Luci lets go of Sam’s hand and snaps all his focus towards Charlie. His mask of cool annoyance is dropped. Instead he looks furious, not letting anyone get a chance to speak before he does. “Wow, C. That Gilda really did a number on you, didn’t she? What the fuck is wrong with you? That was way out of line!”

Charlie looks up, remorseful and shamefaced. “I can explain—”

Sam feels like he’s missed something. Luci was the one who’d acted out of line.

“Oh you don’t need to explain. I can see all too well what’s going on. Gilda fucked you up, and now you are being a vindictive little bitch, fucking other girls over. Avoiding the risk of getting hurt by choosing beautiful girls with zero self-esteem, and throwing them to the curb as soon as you’re done with them. Perpetualizing the idea that all they’re worth is the sum of their bodies. Whatever did Gilda do to you, to change you so much? You used to be all about female empowerment, C! Look at you now! I don’t mind playing the villain to get you out of a sticky, but this is going to far. Not only are you making these girls feel like trash—but you’re bringing them to our home, disrespecting both me and Sam by doing so.”

Charlie throws Sam an apologetic look. He is surprised to be included in this.

Luci’s not done. He gets up from the chair, walks around to stand above Charlie, looming, scowling, and puts his fists on his hips. “Haven’t you noticed how uncomfortable it makes Sam to have these girls parading nearly nude in the mornings? Fuck sake, C. Me doing this is supposed to be a last resort, not a standard procedure on Saturday mornings!” Charlie shrinks in on herself, silently taking the angry scolding. “New rule. You want to bring chicks home, fine. But you wait until the third date at least, or until you’re sure it’s someone you want to continue seeing. I gave you a new credit card—fucking use it! Get a fucking hotel room if all you want is to fuck. Don’t fucking shit where you eat! We’re three people living here now and—”

“I don’t live here,” Sam hears himself say.

It shuts Luci right up. Both their heads snaps towards him, Charlie’s face full of surprise, Luci’s… for a beat Sam thinks he sees hurt there, but if there was, it’s gone as soon as it came and he only
looks even more pissed off, lips pressed to a thin line and nostrils flaring.

Luci throws his hands up. “You know what? Fuck the both of you. I’m going for a run. Don’t follow me.” He stomps out of the kitchen. “Mikey? Heel,” they hear him call, followed by the patter of Mikey’s trotting feet. The door slams hard enough to rattle the paintings on the wall.

Sam’s stomach sour and twists in knots. He wants to follow, not just because they were meant to run together, but because he wants to make Luci not angry.

“What do you mean? Of course you live here. Luci’s right, about everything he said. This is your home too,” Charlie says confusedly, making Sam look back from where he’d been watching Luci and Mikey’s disappearing forms through the window.

“No. I’ve got my own house. I just… just sleep here often because…” he trails off. Since the first week Charlie came home and he tried to give the pair space (and failed), he’d only been home a couple of times to get clothes. Five times perhaps during the last three weeks. Funny how time flies without you noticing it.

“Nonono,” Charlie protests, visibly upset. “Okay, wow. That explains something I’ve been wondering about… Sam, get dressed, we’re going out. We need to talk. I think, it’s possibly long overdue.”

“What about Luci?”

“He’ll be back later. Possibly tomorrow. It’s hard to tell when he gets like that.”

That’s not comforting at all, making the worms of anxiety crawl even more in Sam’s belly.

“Where are we going?”

“To get drunk.”

“It’s ten in the morning, Charlie.”

“But it’s Saturday, so it’s cool. And you don’t have to drink, but I kinda do. Come on.”

Reluctantly, Sam agrees.

“I’m sorry, Sam. I didn’t think about… look. It’s easy to fall into old habits, okay? Luci never had a partner I cared enough about to bother adjusting my behaviour for. And I didn’t think that you might be bothered by strange girls… you know. Luci never was. I…” Charlie takes another shot, runs a hand through her hair and takes a deep breath. “I’m really sorry. I’m a bit of a mess to be honest. More than I think I was, and…”

The cab ride to the restaurant had been mostly silent. Sam had sent Luci two texts and tried calling, getting only voicemail. By the time they got here, Sam was a nervous wreck. They had sat down in a booth in the back, ordered hot wings and nachos, along with shots and beers. Alcohol before breakfast had seemed like a much more viable option, once nerves about Lucifer running out on them took a firm hold. Sam’s not sure what he did wrong. Did Luci catch him looking at Jewel the wrong way? What if he wanted to break up? Please, no! None of them had touched the food, but downed two shots and almost a whole beer before Charlie started speaking.

“It’s okay,” Sam says and gives Charlie a tentative smile.

“No it’s fracken not. Everything Luci said in the kitchen is true. I just don’t know how to start.”
Charlie taps a finger to her chin, thinking. “Okay. Let’s start with Jewel, so I can get a bit more drunk before we talk about the more serious shit.”

“Her name really was Jewel?” Sam asks in surprise. “How did Luci know that? We were asleep when you came in last night.”

Charlie grins. “No you weren’t. You were going at it like horndogs.” Sam’s cheeks burn hot in response. He coughs, downs another shot, then fiddles with his beer, making Charlie chuckle. “I told him her name,” Charlie relents.

Sam looks up and Charlie points at her T-shirt. It has a print of a bunny with angel wings on it, surrounded by flowers, bees, honey, stars, different jewels, cherries, candy, a kitten, a rainbow, and a lot of other small details. Charlie taps a cluster of jewels. “See, I pointed at this. Just by putting this shirt on he knew what I was up to, and each thing represents a common name. We designed it as a joke a long time ago, but have ended up using it a couple of times.”

“Oh.”

“Yeah. I know. See, I’ve always been a bit of a ladykiller, especially in college,” Charlie says and waggles her eyebrows, smile not fully reaching her eyes. “I get easily infatuated, right? But I don’t fall in love often. I’ve had, I don’t know how many open relationships, and friends with benefits, but very few long serious relationships. It’s been more of a free love, kinda deal. Sometimes, but not often, my girlfriends have gotten more attached than I, and had trouble accepting that I’ve broken up with them. So, Luci has helped me out by playing the big bad, so to speak. But I swear, it didn’t happen as often as this last month might have led you to believe. Luci kinda hit the nail about Gilda… she was my equivalent of a Lilith, I guess.” She looks miserable as she says it. “I fell head over heels for her and got burnt pretty badly. Hell, I hid in a monastery for one and a half year trying to get over her for God sake. With no internet, no less.”

Sam gives her a sympathetic smile. “I’m sorry to hear that, Charlie.” He takes a swig of his beer. The alcohol is starting to loosen him up, warming his belly. The worry is still there, of course, but pushed to the back of his mind.

“Yeah… I guess I’ve acquired a set of commitment issues I didn’t have before. When Jewel started making plans for us for the next month, I… anyway.” Charlie leans forward on her elbows. “Look, Sam. When I left I tried to convince Luci to go with me, but soon before we were set to go he was offered to take a really big, impossible case. Remember the Sandover Bridge & Iron Inc. scandal?”

“Yeah, of course I do.”

“Luci represented the employees who had filed a lawsuit against Sandover. It was one of those can’t-be-won cases, that, if you don’t know Luci well enough already, you’ll learn that few things will make him pop a boner and take the bit like a case like that. So he chose to stay behind. And, as you know, he won.” Charlie shrugs and does a whataya-know?-face, then takes a sip of her beer. She takes a deep breath and lets it out slowly. “Which brings us to what I want to talk to you about.”

“Okay?”

“Luci and I are really fracking close, you know? Since we met in college we’ve been like this.” Charlie holds up a hand with two fingers crossed.

Sam snorts in dry amusement. “I’ve noticed.”
“Right. There’s nothing remotely romantic or sexual going on between us, but we’re more than just friends.” She looks at him seriously, prompting him to nod before she goes on. “I missed him like hell when I was away. I mean, seriously. It was hell. I still had a blast and all, but not a day went by that I didn’t miss him. And… I’ve always pictured us together. Like, we’d live in a big house, me and my girlfriend, and he and his partner. Growing old together. Maybe raising children. I dunno. It’s just what I always pictured.” Charlie spins her beer bottle round and round, looking at it. “I thought that would happen because he never hooked up with anyone that was, I dunno, special enough to break those plans. He’s always chosen me before anyone. But then I came home and there you were…”

Sam keeps quiet, listening.

Charlie looks up and meets his gaze. “I know you, Sam. Not as well as your brother, but I know you, and I really like you. And Luci is so in love with you, it’s insane. You’re everything he’s ever wanted, and never thought he could have. You’re what he fell for in Lilith, but that was an act from her part—you’re the real deal.”

“What does that mean? Luci’s said it a couple of times.”

“She was, or should I say, pretended to be, kindhearted, generous, incorruptible, morally upstanding, idealistic. You know, the works. Like you are. But she faked it. She had Luci’s type pinned down perfectly. Not the type he usually went for, but what he really wanted. I dunno how she figured that out. He never dated anyone like that.”

“But if you knew she was faking—”

Charlie waves a hand in front of her and shakes her head. “No, no. I didn’t know she was faking it, I just hated her from the start. I had nothing on her. She was squeaky clean. Except my gut feeling told me she was an ugly demon from hell.” She waves to a waiter for more shots and takes another sip of her beer. “But what I’m trying to say here, is that you two, I really ship you.”

“Ship us?” Sam frowns in confusion.

“I want your relationship to work out, I mean. But at the same time you scare me.”

“Scare you?”

The waiter comes and puts two new rows of shots in front of them. Charlie waits until he’s gone before she continues. “Yeah…” She looks down on the table. “You’re so… so conventional. Luci’s my only family and he deserves someone like you. You’re not gonna want to live with me all your life, even if Luci would. And that scares me. I don’t know how long you’ll put up with me, before you kick me out. Plus, I feel like I’m third wheeling it sometimes. It’s never been like that before.”

Sam chuckles bemusedly. “You feel like you’re third wheeling it? I feel like I’m third wheeling it. So get this. You got all these private jokes, and you’re cuddling on the couch, and, and, you do all this stuff, making me feel left out. I don’t really know how to deal with it, to be honest.”

It’s Charlie’s turn to chuckle, giving him a bright grin. “That’s how I feel.”

“Really?”

“Mhm. Sam. I really want to make this work. The reason we act like we do, is because Luci’s former girlfriends, Lilith in particular, tried to break us apart, setting ultimatums and rules. And any time he complied, they just put up more rules. And we’ve said, ‘fuck it’, we come as a package deal, and they’ll have to deal with it. Kinda like you and Dean. Because you know,
having a bigger brother stomping in at any given moment, making himself at home, is not the norm. But I like that about you two, and so does Luci. But. I want you two to work. So if you need me to back off…”

Sam feels a lot better about the ‘Charlie-situation’, now that they’re talking about it. It’s a really good thing. He feels a lot less threatened, a lot less in competition with her. It never even occurred to him, that she might have felt the same. “No. Not at all. But maybe if you could, I dunno, wait until after I’ve gone to the bathroom before you take a bath in the mornings?” he says with a smile and a raised eyebrow.

“It really bothers you that much?”

Sam snorts in amusement and her perplexed expression. “Yeah. It really does.”

“Alright. What else?”

They proceed to talk about it. What has been bothering them, and needs to change. It’s surprisingly little if you take rivalry out of the picture. They even discuss the whole cuddling bit, with the conclusion that Sam doesn’t mind it, but he’s got first dibs. (Really? Is that something that should be bartered for?) Also, he admits that he doesn’t mind her cuddling or hugging him either. Possibly it’s the alcohol talking, but he doesn’t think so. Charlie is very open with her affections. He remembers her cuddling up to Dean during movie nights back when he was still living with his brother. That’s just who she is.

The topics start drifting into other things after that. Lighter topics more suited for how drunk they’ve become. They don’t come home until 6 PM. Luci is not at home and still not answering his phone, although it doesn’t go straight to voicemail at least. Sam’s not sure if that’s a good thing or not. He worries. He’s still not sure what made Luci rush out that morning and it has him queasy. They feed Lucy and sit down to watch something on TV while they wait for Luci to come back home.

He’s not sure what woke him. Charlie is snoozing softly on his shoulder, wedged between the backrest and him. Memory trickles back like sludge. The both of them had laid on the couch and more or less passed out drunk. He’s still not sober, but not yet hung over. It’s quiet. It shouldn’t be. They fell asleep with the TV on.

He opens his eyes and blinks in the semi-darkness. Lucifer is sitting on the living room table, leaned forward, elbows on his knees. He’s watching them with a soft, slightly sad, tired expression, but lips quirked in the tiniest smile.

“I’m sorry,” Sam says.

“What for?” Luci asks, voice quiet.

“I dunno. For whatever made you angry at me.”

Luci snorts and shakes his head, smiling, but with a slightly bitter twist to it. “I was never angry at you. And don’t apologise if you don’t know what you’re accused of. Have Lucy been fed?”

“Yeah. You been here long?”

Luci nods and reaches for Sam’s hand. “Come to bed with me?” he asks, sounding uncertain, as if Sam might say no. (Pfhah!)

Sam nods and carefully extracts himself from Charlie. She’s sleeping like dead, not stirring. Luci
covers her with a blanket, then leads Sam to the bedroom by the hand. Mikey and Luci lie sleeping, curled against each other on the bed, so Luci leaves the door slightly ajar. He winds his arms carefully around Sam’s waist, like he’s not sure if he’s allowed. He leans in slowly for a kiss, giving Sam opportunity to withdraw. When their lips meet something wound tightly in Sam finally relaxes. Luci tastes of whiskey. His every move is gentle and slow, caressing Sam’s sides as he lifts the shirt off him.

“Why did y—“ Sam starts asking, but Luci hushes him. Wordlessly telling him he doesn’t want to talk right now. And, okay. There’s been a lot of talking today. It can wait. Luci’s being so gentle, so sweet, with every kiss and caress. They’re both drunk, judging by the redness of Luci’s eyes and the taste of whiskey in his mouth. It can wait. Clothes come off and they lay down carefully enough to barely disturb their pets. Luci keeps kissing and caressing, running his nose and lips along Sam’s neck, shoulder, and collarbone. Sensual, almost reverent touches, with no sexual endgame, lull Sam to sleep. He wakes up once during the night to find Luci still awake, lying on his side, head propped up on his elbow, just watching him. He gives Luci a sleepy smile and fall back to sleep.

The next morning he wakes up alone in bed. He can hear Luci and Charlie in the kitchen, laughing and shooting shit. He goes about his morning routine and then goes into the kitchen to find breakfast served. Lucifer holds Lucy in his lap, distracting her from stealing the cheese on Sam’s sandwiches with ear scratches and cuddles. Mikey is sleeping under the table. There’s not a trace of yesterday’s drama.

“Good morning, sleeping beauty,” Luci greets him as he sits down in his spot. “Charlie suggested we all go to the zoo today. I suggested she go to the zoo, while you and I do unspeakable things on her bed, since that’s the only room in the house we haven’t conquered yet. What do you say?” Luci asks with a cheeky smile that usually means he’s up to no good. He grabs Sam’s socked foot with his bare one under the table, curling his toes around it. Sam loves when he does that.

“What Luci’s leaving out, is that I reminded him that all my web cams are remote controlled,” Charlie chimes in with a smile as she places a cup of coffee in front of Sam, getting a silent thank you. “so I’d be able to follow all your endeavors through livestreaming, while recording.”

Luci sticks his tongue out at her.

Sam chuckles bemusedly. “Um… actually. I haven’t been at the zoo since I was… twelve I think. Sounds like a nice idea.”

“Yes!” Charlie exclaims victoriously.

“Damnit.”

“You don’t want to go?” Sam asks and takes a bite of his sandwich.

“If the choice is between staying at home, making a porno with you, and go to the zoo, risking arrest, I prefer the first option. But zoo it is.”

“Risking arrest?”

“My last visit didn’t end well,” Luci smirks.

“That lemur was only being friendly,” Charlie says with a grin.

Luci frowns. “It wouldn’t let go of me, so they almost booked me for trying to steal it. If anything it was the other way around,” he groused.
They end up going and Sam has a blast. The rivalry between him and Charlie stays gone, and ever so often he catches Luci looking at them interacting, wearing a secret little smile. He totally forgets to ask Luci what made him so upset that he left the day before. Which is a shame really. If he had, they could have avoided their first real fight a couple of weeks later. But at least he and Charlie continued to get along, living together.
Communication is key. When it fails, things can go miserably wrong. Luci's been telling himself everything is fine. He's tried talking with Sam a little, while at the same time doing it carefully, because he doesn't want to put pressure on Sam while Sam's recuperating from his depression. But maybe everything isn't as fine as Luci keeps telling himself. And maybe that leads to them having a much bigger problem than necessary.

**Warnings:**
Make note of added tags.
The cliffhanger is a bit misleading, but the next chapter is nearly finished for publishing and you won't have to wait more than 24 hours for it, probably a lot less. Oh and the domestic violence tag is kinda like the rape tag, it's not really what it seems, and we'll see what really happened in the next chapter. But if it's a sensitive subject for you, feel free to contact me on [Tumblr](https://www.tumblr.com) and I'll give you a short spoilery description of what happens, so you'll be prepared.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

_**Super Psycho Love**_

**Setting Foot On A Mine Field**

He tries telling himself he doesn’t care. It doesn’t matter. Things are going great. Charlie and Sam are getting along. A lot better than expected, after the first bumpy month when Sam had walked around like he was on needles, either withdrawing or challenging C when they were all three together. Other things were falling into place too. He’d introduced C to Cole Trenton, the client who owned Buddy and had his own security company since he left the Marines. C had been hired by him to test out the virtual security of Cole’s clients. Basically, Charlie got paid to hack into systems legally. Not that Charlie needed a job for the money, but if she didn’t work she got up to no good. Dean had finally gotten leave to go on vacation from work, and was currently on a plane to Argentina, off to see if Cain really was Wayne’s long lost son—and if he was, find out if he wanted contact with his father.

Jo had gathered enough evidence to file a lawsuit against her employers. Sam took the lead on that one, Luci sitting in as his assistant, with the blessing of Tom, Sam’s boss. Speaking of Tom, Sam liked to work from home if he could. He didn’t work much overtime nowadays, but since they were all but living together, Tom had asked Sam to bring Luci by the office to sign a letter of confidentiality, so that he didn’t have to hide his work from Luci unless Luci was the opposing counsel in a case.
Luci was amused by that, and knew full well what Tom was up to. Tom wanted Luci to mentor Sam. He saw Sam as a younger, less experienced, (less morally corrupt) version of Lucifer. He saw a chance for his firm’s best lawyer to get some training from the best lawyer, without risking losing him or having to pay for it. Luci smiles to himself thinking about it. He isn’t conceited, it’s the truth of the matter. He didn’t mind. In fact, he had Sam sign a letter of confidentiality so that they could discuss his cases too. It made working from home a lot more enjoyable. Not that he needed any help from Sam (honestly, Sam didn’t need his either). But he did enjoy getting Sam’s opinion on things. The meeting with Tom had been… well, interesting, entertaining and most of all, enlightening, seeing Tom and Sam interact. Both he and Tom had been on their best behaviour in front of Sam, biting their tongue to keep from throwing old familiar insults at each other, and slot into old familiar behaviour patterns.

The end result was that Sam and he often worked an hour or two together after dinner. Sam sitting in his recliner, he, behind his desk, while Lucy did her best to distract the both of them. It was really enjoyable, and on good days Charlie was at home in her room, so one could throw out a random question about material one shouldn’t be partial to, and the in-house hacker would answer. The first time that had happened, Sam was left staring between Luci and the hallway leading to Charlie’s room. Not that Luci asked C to hack anything. It was more like he asked into the room in general, “Hm. I wonder what…” and C just happened to say it out loud after a moment. He’d expected Sam to get all prissy about it. What he hadn’t expected, was for Sam to try it out for himself a while later. For some reason that made his heart speed up in exhilaration. He enjoyed seeing his pure, noble partner cut a few corners and be pragmatic.

So really, things were going great. Home life, sex life, work, social life… He shouldn’t care about one tiny little detail, that was nothing but semantics anyway. But Sam just kept pointing it out. Like tiny jabs of a dagger. “I don’t live here.”

Nevermind that Sam’s house, at the moment, was nothing more than an expensive closet. That’s all. Sam went home to get clean clothes once or twice a week. Less and less often as most of his clothes had already ended up in Luci’s wardrobe—that he himself thought of as their wardrobe until Sam popped his bubble again and again with one simple sentence. “I don’t live here.” The smile melts off of Luci’s face when he thinks about it.

Then there was the other thing. Sam seemed to have decided that if he couldn’t afford it for himself within three months of saving, he wouldn’t let Luci pay for it. It shouldn’t matter, but it did. That meant he said no to basically every fucking trip Luci suggested. Weekend trip to Vegas? Bahamas? Maui? Nope. Nope. Nope. He finally found someone he really wanted to give the world, and the fucker didn’t want it, and it fucking mattered.

He can’t figure out why Sam insists on saying no.

Just like Lilith.

Oh, she accepted gifts and went on trips with him, sure. But it had been the same “taking it slow” issue. It was always “too soon”, always an excuse for not introducing him to her parents, for not officially moving in. Of course, when she did it, she was manipulating him—making him feel unsure about himself, triggering him to try to prove himself to her, and getting him more adamant to make sure she stayed. It’d been a trap to get him to propose. If it hadn’t been for Charlie he’d been so under her thumb…

Sam did the same thing, softcore, but the effect is the same. His doubt about Sam’s affection keeps growing, so does his desperation to “tie him down”. He hates it. He hates this growing insecurity. Charlie keeps telling him to give it time. That Sam is working with himself, and that's why he’s hesitant to take the next step. That maybe you shouldn’t make big decisions like that while
struggling to get out of depression. There’s also the part of Sam’s exes dying on him that plays a part in Sam holding back.

Luci doesn’t care. He doesn’t want to be understanding. Not when it hurts him and undermines his confidence. Not when he wants Sam close 24/7. Even if he encourages Sam to go to the support group, meet up with friends and whatever fuck. For him, moving in with Sam is about as much of a “big decision” as taking another breath. Which to say, it isn’t. It’s fucking natural.

His phone chirps with a Twitter notification. Nowadays MooseOnTheLoose mostly tweets during daytime. Luci absently wonders if he’s met someone. It suits him just fine. He can take out his frustration on the guy and then devote himself to his own life undisturbed after work.

‘Where there’s anger, there’s always pain underneath.’

“Well aren’t you insightful,” Luci mutters mal-contentedly.

Sam’s gone out with friends from work tonight, and Luci isn’t happy about it, because Sam didn’t ask him to come along. Sure, he’d been encouraging Sam to go out with his colleagues, and to have an independent social life. They’ve both chosen careers that at times will make their workdays long and gruelling, and leave the other person to spend many evenings alone. So Sam coming out of his shell is a good thing. The anger, hurt, and gnawing ball of insecurity in Luci’s belly might be incongruent with what he’s been telling Sam. The problem is that it’s the fourth time Sam’s gone out with Stiles and Layla, and not once had he asked Luci to come. So what if they went straight from the office to the bar? Luci is fucking mobile. He didn’t need Sam to escort him there or anything.

Luci’s spent the three previous occasions making up excuses for Sam not inviting him to come along.

Today, he isn’t making excuses, he’s coming up with reasons why Sam wouldn’t want him to be there.

*Maybe he’s ashamed to be dating the notorious Nick Alighieri?*

Not towards his closest friends, but towards other lawyers who had the same noble mindset as himself.

Luci swallows around an angry lump in his throat, when he thinks about Sam being ashamed to be seen with him amongst people he likes and admires.

*Stop it. You’re not someone to be ashamed of.*

Ah, but Sam’s both noble and beautiful. He’s been getting a lot better, depression wise. He doesn’t really *need* Luci anymore, like he did the first months. He’s started taking initiatives to do things non work related, like go for coffee with people in his support group after the meetings, take walks along the beach by himself, and even go to the fucking gun range to fire off some rounds. That’s right. Sam owns a gun. But he hadn’t asked Luci to come along to that either. Just because Luci’s got other opinions on gun control, doesn’t mean he doesn’t enjoy shooting. But Sam *hadn’t even asked*. Luci always asks. Even if he knows Sam hates doing something, on the off chance he’ll say yes, just because Luci wants him around.

Sam is little by little reconquering a balanced mental state, and with each step it feels like he’s distancing himself.

And now he’s out with beautiful, sweet Layla, with her kindness and warmth, and funny, cute Styles with his exuberant ways. Now, why wouldn’t he want his boyfriend along for that?
It would be quite a cock block.

Shut up.

It makes sense.

He picks up his phone and dials Sam’s number. Sam answers on third ring. “Darling, I’ve got a solution for you,” Luci says in lieu of hello.

Sam chuckles. “I didn’t know I had a problem. But, okay, let’s hear it,” he humours Luci. His voice is a bit softer and higher pitched, like it gets when he’s had a couple of beers. There’s laughter in the background.

“Let your house up for rent. Your mortgage will be paying itself, your economy will get back on track. And you can give your tenant a three months contractual notice to move out, should you ditch me. Dean and Cas has a guest room, if you don’t want to stick around for those three months.”

Sam lets out an annoyed huff. “I don’t— I’m not going to ditch you, okay? Look. Can we talk about this some other time?” he dodges with a patient tone of voice.

Luci hums, leans back in his office chair, and pulls thoughtfully on his lip. “Fair enough. Just think about it, will you, dear?”

Sam chuckles again. “Yeah, sure, I—” Sam’s interrupted by someone speaking to him. Luci can’t hear what’s said. He thinks it’s Stiles, but he’s not sure. Whoever it is, he makes Sam laugh out loud. The best sound in the world, and somebody else is getting to own it.

He’s happy. Be happy for him.

Except it cuts like knives, whatever he tells himself.

“Hey, Luce. So get this—“ Sam says, mirth still carrying in his voice. “Yesterday a guy came into the offi— Oip!” He cuts off with a startled little yelp, this time he can hear the voice of the speaker clearly, meaning they’re leaning close. ‘Winchester! How nice to see you let your hair down for a change.’ Luci’s gut clenches and twists uncomfortably. He knows that voice. Worse, he knows that tone. He can see those playful blue eyes and the smirk that accompanies that particular pitch. He hears Sam respond, pleasantly surprised. “Mr.Rainsborough! I didn’t know you were going to join us.”

Luci resorts himself to listening intently.

“I just won the Barracuda case. Grace is in Cleveland, and I’m in the mood for celebrating. I figured I’d nip down here and pick up my employees’ tabs, getting you all plastered, so I’m not the only one terribly hungover tomorrow.”

Sam laughs again. Carefree and intoxicating. “Challenge accepted, Sir.” It’s bad. Luci has the exact image of Sam when he says that. Lopsided smirk, head slightly tipped to the side and eyes narrowing impishly.

Tom chuckles darkly. “That’s the spirit, Sam. I’ll go get us shots.”

A smile is carrying through Sam’s voice when he comes back on the line. “Luce, I got to go. My boss just got here.”
“I gather you won’t be back for dinner tonight then?”

“That’s fucking NOT okay!"

“Very well, babe. Have fun,” he says, not wanting to spoil Sam’s evening.

“You too. Love you.”

“You’d better.”


“Bye, darlin’.” Luci hangs up and stares resentfully at his phone. He fights against the impulse to throw it on the wall and watch it shatter. “Bela!” he calls out.

“What?” she snipes back at him from her desk. “I can hear you just fine when you don’t shout.”

“Call Mr McLeod and tell him, that if he wants me defending him, he can get his ass here within an hour, or the offer is withdrawn. And shut my door. I don’t need you listening in on everything.”

“You’ve got legs. You can shut it yourself,” Bela says and makes the phone call.

“You’re closer,” Luci protests petulantly.

Bela holds up her hand to silence him. “Hello, Crowley. Thank you for the lovely gift,” she purrs into the speaker. “I told you I could get you a chance, and now you’ve got it. Come here within the hour and Mr. Alighieri will speak to you. It’s up to you to convince him to take your case. I held up my part of the bargain. ….Pfft. ….Sweetheart, tell it to someone who cares. It’s now or not at all. Goodbye, Fergus.”

Luci smirks despite his foul mood. “He bribed you to make me take his case?”

Bela holds up her other arm and rattles a broad diamond bracelet.

“You haven’t tried to convince me to take his case,” Luci states, amused, and pleased to boot.

“If men are dumb enough to shower me with gifts, who am I to say no? If they’re even dumber, and think I owe them anything for it…?” Bela shrugs and waves a well manicured hand dismissively, then goes back to writing on her keyboard.

Luci sniggers. “What do you say. Nip out at lunch together tomorrow and let me buy you a necklace to match that one?”

Bela doesn’t look away from her computer screen, but her lips quirk upward in a very satisfactory manner. “I’ll make sure your schedule is cleared for the occasion. Oh and please, don’t forget to fill me in on the fight you’re going to have with your holier-than-thou boyfriend when he finds out you took Fergus MacLeod’s case.”

Luci snorts and runs a hand through his hair. “He can keep his hobbies, I’ll keep mine,” he mutters with a sour twist to his mouth.

“Really? I thought you turned Crowley down to keep your darling saint happy?”
“I changed my mind. And shut up, or I’ll take someone else out to buy diamonds tomorrow.”

“Like who?” Bela asks, highly amused by now.

“Doutzen Kroes maybe. Or Candice Swanepoel?”

Bela looks like a cat with a bowl of cream. “Ooo. Somebody is trying to make the boyfriend jealous. Trouble in paradise?”

Luci rolls his eyes, gets up from his chair and stalks over to the door to close it. He starts closing it, then halts the movement and scrunches up his face in a bothered expression. “Do you think they’re his type?”

“Sheeheart, I’m his type,” Bela answers with a teasing smirk.

Luci makes a disgusted noise and closes the door.

Luci Love: Are you awake?

Charlie: Of course I am! It’s only 3 AM. You think I’ve gotten weak since I grew old?

Luci Love: You’re far from old, C. Where are you?

Charlie: Cole took me to Nashville for the week. Client meeting. Right now I’m out partying. Met this gorgeous cowgirl named Mary Belle here. She’s explaining roping to me. It’s when they catch cows with lasso. I’m planning to take her back to the hotel and show her I’m very adept at roping myself. ;D

Luci Love: I’d say that roping and shibari doesn’t count in quite the same category.

Luci Love: Send pictures.

Charlie: You got it!

Luci Love: Do you think Sam’s growing tired of me?

Charlie: Dude. Have you seen him when he’s with you? Not a chance!

Charlie: Wait. Are we having a crisis? Should I ditch the cowgirl and call you? Did something happen? Did you do something stupid? Did Sam do something stupid? I’d ask if Dean did something stupid, but he’s not in the country currently, so for once he’s got to be innocent.

Luci Love: It’s nothing. Don’t worry. Focus on sending me pictures of your cowgirl tied up instead.
Charlie: Alright. If you insist. But don’t hesitate to call if you need me.

Luci Love: I won’t. Love you.

Charlie: Love you too, boo.

4:07 AM Luci’s still staring up at the ceiling. Sleep won’t come. Part of him wants to text Sam and beg him to come home. Part of him wants to text Sam and tell him to go to hell. He tries to be rational about it. Supposedly it’s natural not wanting to spend every moment together. Just because Luci has this painful longing anytime they’re apart doesn’t mean Sam has it too.

"I’m gonna sleep at home so I don’t wake you up."

A knife cuts at his heart, every time the sentence repeated itself in his head. Why does Sam even bother going to the shooting range when he’s firing words like bullets right here?

He knows he only has Sam temporarily. He’s too good for Luci. And now Sam’s out getting himself plastered. With Tom Rainsborough, Stiles Stilinski, Layla Rourke, and who knows who else? Beautiful people with good hearts. Nothing like Luci. Fuck, but Layla is marriage material. She and Sam would make such a lovely pair.

Stop it! Stop it! Stop it!

He wonders if this is the night Sam will cheat on him for the first time. He wonders if he’ll own up to it, or if he’ll pretend like nothing happened even if it did. He considers asking Charlie to hack the bar’s security cameras, if it has any. He’s so certain he’s been seeing the incipient signs of their end as a couple, this last month.

His phone rings and he jerks around to grab it so suddenly that Mikey wakes up and barks once in startlement.

It isn’t Sam. The country code is 54. “Dean?” Luci quizzes as a greeting.

“Heeey! Luci, mah sib from another crib!” Dean’s voice is rough from flight air condition, but happy.

Luci falls back on his pillow again. He reaches out to pet Mikey, to signal that everything is fine. “If that’s the truth Dean, I’m a bit uncertain if I want to find out exactly how close you and Sam really are.”

Dean barks out a short cackle. “Not that close. Although, if we were, I’d bet you’d develope a brother kink real fucking fast, wouldn’t you?” he teases, completely at ease with the incest joke.

Luci can picture Dean waggle his eyebrows with a meaningful grin on his face. It makes him smile and alleviates some of the nauseating feelings that’s been keeping him up. He makes a sturgeon face and shrugs a shoulder, then hums his agreement. “Mmmh. I would lie if I said I don’t find the thought of watching the two of you make love, beguilingly erotic.”

Dean cackles. “Watch it, Luci. If Sam wakes up and hears you say that, he’s gonna throw up all over the bed.”

“Don’t worry about Sam. He’s either still out drinking, or he’s sleeping in his house tonight. We can say as many dirty-bad-wrong things as we want, without princess Samantha sticking her professionally offended nose in the air,” Luci counters, lips twisting in distaste.
Dean of course, finds it funny. “Dude, you want to marry that princess.”

“Doesn’t change the fact that he’s perpetually offended by people being people, when it clashes with the overly frail psyches of other people.”

Dean sniggers. “Man, it sounds like y’all have a fight brewin’.”

“Most certainly. I took a case he’s going to find objectionable. But enough about that. You sound chipper beyond belief. I find that surprising, considering your apprehension about flying.” Apprehension was putting it mildly.

“Yeah. But Cas prescribed me some tranquilizers, and I kept a steady stream of whiskey coming, so I’m alright. I’ve spent almost thirteen hours on a plane. Can’t freak out for that long, now can I?”

“Sure you can. I’m glad you didn’t, though. So. You’re not in Kansas anymore, Dorothy. How do you feel?”

“I feel awesome! Like I can’t fucking wrap my head around that I’m not in the US anymore. I’m in another fucking country. It feels unreal.”

“You’ve never been outside the US before?” Luci asks, screwing up his face in a bemused expression.

“Well. Yeah. But only in Canada. And I dunno, it didn’t feel as exotic, if you know what I mean?”

“I do. Do you enjoy it? Travelling, I mean. Would you like to see the rest of the world too? I can take you.” Luci lifts a hand to bite on his index finger while waiting for the reply.

“Fuck yeah! Dude, that’d be awesome.”

Something warm and content, unfurls in the pit of Luci’s stomach, and spreads through the rest of his body. “Mmmh. I’ll make it happen. Maybe bring the rest of the squad along too. You still got the address of the guide?”

“Yeah. What do I need to know about him? I was a bit preoccupied about flying to remember what you told me.”


“His name is Cesar Cuevas, and he’s originally from New Mexico. He moved to Argentina 2010, adopted a son with his husband, and now breed criollo horses on a ranch outside of Buenos Aires. He still keeps a small apartment in the city and occasionally takes guide and interpreter jobs if the pay is good enough and the cause is just. He’s very down to earth. I think you’ll get along. He’ll be expecting you. Just give him a call. What time is it over there? 9 AM something?”

“9:18, to be exact.”

“Mh. This is the number you’ll be using during your stay?”

“Yeah. I took your advice and bought a domestic prepaid card.”

“I’ll save it then. Call me if you need anything. And good luck.”

“Thanks. I will.”
After hanging up, Luci feels a million times better. He has about three weeks before he has to immerse himself in the MacLeod case. Until then he’ll have Bela and a couple of chosen lawyers in his employ gather as much info he needs to start working.

*Maybe I should take one week’s vacation before then? Finally take Sam to Sardinia, like I’ve wanted to. We can work on the final preparations for Jo’s case while we’re away.*

Lost in pleasant thoughts about going to Italy with Sam, working a case together, he finally drifts off to sleep.

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Coming home from his morning run with Mikey, he finds Sam sitting in the living room couch, head bent and hidden in his big hands. He’s dressed for work, in one of his grey suits with a striped tie.

“Good morning, darling. Didn’t expect to see you until after work,” Luci greets him, trying to sound upbeat, and not let his crippling self doubts affect him, as he kicks off his shoes.

Sam groans and massages his temples. “Yeah, um. I forgot I had all my work clothes here.” Sam ignores Mikey’s enthusiastic tries to greet him with kisses, flinching when the little dog barks, trying to get attention.

“Maybe you should take that as a hint,” Luci suggests offhandedly, stripping out of his dirty clothes, save underwear, right inside the door.

“Ugh. Could you, *not*, start that right now?” Sam carps.

Luci turns into the kitchen, to keep a waspish retort of his own from escaping. Mikey comes trotting after him, ever the hopeful optimist. He pours a cup of black coffee, makes a sandwich (dropping a slice of ham to Mikey), takes a water bottle from the fridge, and rummages around in a drawer for advil. He brings his bounty to the living room and puts it all down in front of Sam carefully, not to trigger the headache with sharp sounds. “Here you go, baby. This will help stave off your hangover,” he says and kisses Sam’s temple softly.

Sam leans closer without looking up. “Thanks. It feels like my head explodes with every heartbeat.”

“Mmh. You’re such a light weight. I’ll just take a shower, then I can drive you to work. You shouldn’t be behind a wheel in this state.”

“Thank you,” Sam mumbles and reaches for the advil and water. Luci gives his temple another kiss, inhaling deeply. He smells fruity. Another little discordant. A remnant of Sam’s old life with Sarah, he thinks. Sam usually smells of Luci’s shower gel these days.

He goes to pick up the clothes from the floor and carries them to the bathroom. He puts them straight in the washer, takes a small bottle of Clear Blue from the bathroom cabinet, and goes back to the living room to put the eye drops in front of Sam, getting another mumbled thanks, then goes to take his shower.

Sam’s quiet in the car, staring unseeingly out of the passenger side window, one hand resting on Luci’s thigh. The warmth bleeding through can’t quell the infected thrum within.

The silence and lack of eye contact is making Luci antsy. He feels pathetic. He needs reassurance that they’re okay, and Sam still needs him. *Wrong.* Wants him. Sam’s made sure he doesn’t *need*
Luci in any way.

“Did you have a nice night?” Luci asks, sounding way too chipper, trying to cover up the fact that he really wants to scream at Sam to never stay out like that without calling when he gets home. Or to get himself home to begin with. And home, should mean Luci, like Sam means home to him.

“Yeah. I had a blast.” Sam smiles to himself, recollecting the night, still looking tiredly through the window.

“When did you get home?”

“I don’t know exactly.”

“You don’t know?” Luci barely manages to change his tone from outrage to surprise in time.

“No. We stayed at the Anchor until it closed, drinking it dry.” Sam chuckles and shakes his head to himself. “Then we went to Moonlight.”

“The whole bunch of you went out dancing? How’d that work for Layla?” Bringing someone in a wheelchair to a place designed solely for dancing (and drinking), with volume too high to carry conversation, may not be ideal.

“No, the others gave up and called it a night before we got to Moonlight. It was just me and Mr. Rainsborough. He’s really different when he lets loose. Both funny and a bit of a teasing jerk, but in a good way, you know? He’s not nearly as strict as you’d think. And a surprisingly good dancer.” Sam’s smiling when he talks about the night spent with his handsome boss. Luci wants to punch something.

“I know. Tom and I partied quite a lot together, back in the days. You should see him tango,” Luci offers amicably while he parks the car outside of Sam’s office.

“I bet. We stayed until closing and shared a cab. I honestly have no clue what time it was, except the sun was up already,” Sam says and shakes his head with a fond lopsided smile at his lap, reminiscing his fun night out.

Luci squeezes the steering wheel, feeling his calm slip further out of his grasp. “Sam,” he says softly, schooling both demeanor and voice to the most serene composure he can manage, keeping his eyes locked on the middle of the steering wheel. “Be honest with me. Did you sleep with him?”

Sam’s head snaps around almost comically fast, eyes round in disbelief. “Luci, what the hell?”

“Did you?” Luci insists, looking up to meet Sam’s gaze calmly. He crosses an arm over his chest, rests his elbow on it and pulls on his lip with his hand.

“Jesus Christ, Luce! You honestly believe I’d cheat on you? Seriously? A) He’s straight. B) He’s my boss. And C) He’s married.” Sam scowls disbelievingly at him, agitation in every fibre.

“It’s a simple yes or no question, Sammy. I’m not hearing a no,” Luci insists.

Sam shakes his head as if he refuses to believe what he’s hearing. “Dude. He’s straight. We were just partying!”

“Yes but you’re not straight. He’s handsome, charming, and fiercely competent. Nobody’s straight when they reach the level of inebriation it seems you were at yesterday. Accidents might happen. I’m only asking for you to be honest with me,” Luci argues patiently.
“I can’t believe you think I’ve cheated. I would never do that.” Sam’s pissed. Of course he is. If he hadn’t even considered Tom that way, just asking would be offensive. But then again, he might take offense at being called out for something he’s guilty of too. Luci has trust issues for a good reason.

“Mh. If you say so. I’ll pick you up after work,” Luci says, soothing the sting. He leans in to give Sam a goodbye peck, but Sam jerks away.

“Don’t bother. I’ll get the bus,” Sam snipes and gets out of the car, throwing one last, hard glare Luci’s way while throwing the car door closed.

None of those things mattered, since Luci already died when Sam jerked away from his kiss, not wanting his touch, making him unable to breathe as effectively as a hard punch straight in the diaphragm would have.

He feels like crawling into a hole, hug his knees and bawl. His eyes sting and a lump forms in his throat. He fights it off and starts the car.

I’m pathetic, he thinks while driving to his own office. Despite feeling like a pathetic, insecure fool, old memories kept popping up.

‘I can’t believe you won’t trust me! Nick, I was visiting family! It’s that red head skank who’s been telling you lies, isn’t it? I love you, Nick! I’d never be unfaithful to you. I’m hurt that you’d think I would.

Lilith had made such a convincing case any time he’d doubted her fidelity. Making it out to be like he was delusional. Granted, he hadn’t doubted her word when she denied it. And all that trust and credibility got shot to hell when he walked in on her with another guy. Finding out that they’d been a couple over all the years she and Luci were dating? Devastating.

Sam: Sorry for being an asshole towards you this morning. I was (am) still horribly hungover. Can I make it up to you by taking you to lunch?

Lucifer: I would have loved to, darling. But I promised Bela we’d go out shopping for a diamond necklace for her during lunch. So I'm busy. Unless you’d like to come along too? We could get you a new watch while we're at it.

Sam: No thanks. Why are you buying her diamonds?

Lucifer: Because she doesn’t tell me not to. You sure you don’t want me to pick you up after work?

Sam: No it’s alright. Stiles is dropping me off. Whose turn is it to fix dinner?
Lucifer: I’ll take care of dinner, darling. As far as I’m concerned, you’re only marginally better at cooking than Cas.

Sam: I’m not that bad. :P


Sam: Love you too. <3

Luci’s home earlier than Sam. He prepares a casserole and takes Mikey for a jog while it’s in the oven. When he comes home he feeds Lucy and Mikey and then heads outside to care for the garden. He hears a car while he’s out back, so he comes around the house. Mikey’s screams of happiness already declared it family. Sam gets up from the ground, holding Mikey to his chest, when he spots Luci. He smiles and reaches out for Luci, tugging him into a dog-sandwiching embrace. It feels so good to be in Sam’s arms again. Yet the feeling that there’s something wrong between them, remains.

Sam’s almost asleep, eyelids closed, eyelashes fanned out over the sensitive skin below the eyes. Luci lies beside him, caressing Sam’s chest with soft fingers. Both were too tired tonight, to have sex. “I’ve been thinking…”

“Mmmhm?” Sam hums drowsily.

“In a few weeks both you and I will have a shitton of work to do, or I at least. I’d like to take you to that restaurant in Sardinia, I told you about. Let’s go away on a little lovers’ vacation. A week tops. We can go through the last details on Jo’s case together, eat on nice restaurants, take walks along the beach, and I can do that thing where I fuck you into the mattress.”

Sam smiles without opening his eyes. “Sounds nice, Luce, but I can’t afford it,” he drones, fighting not to be dragged under by sleep.

“Don’t be a moron, jackass. I’ll pay for it. I haven’t been abroad for way too long now. I’d really like to do this.”

“Mmmh. Maybe we can cook Italian s’meday ‘nstead…” Sam mumbles drowsily, falling asleep on the last notes of the sentence.

No. Sam doesn’t want to travel with him. Disappointed, Luci kisses Sam’s temple, listening to his soft half-snore. “I’m dating the wrong brother,” he mutters to himself and rolls around to turn his back on Sam.

Falling asleep is surprisingly easy compared to how hollow he feels in the wake of Sam’s mumbled refusal to travel. And waking up is as good as always—with Sam’s warm body pressed along his back, and arm around his chest. Everything feels fine again. Everything remains fine while they get up and run together, and while they shower together, and get dressed together. It’s by the breakfast table things go sour again.

Sam’s sipping coffee and reading the newspaper with Lucy in his lap, while Lucifer fries them some egg and bacon. “Is there any way I can change your mind about going to Italy with me for a week? I’d really like to go, Sammy.”
“Yeah. That would have been neat. But I’ve been away from work too much because of my depression, and it’s too expensive. In the future perhaps? When I’ve got my economy in order.”

“It’s not too expensive, as I’m paying for it. Tom would gladly give you one week off from work to travel abroad, I’m sure. And all you need to do to get a handle on your economy is let your house up for let,” Luci says and puts down a plate in front of Sam.

Sam sighs, fed up and annoyed. “Luce, we’ve talked about this. I’ll think about it okay? I just need to take it slow. Maybe we can do a road trip during the weekend or something?”

Luci grunts noncommittally and serves himself eggs and bacon. He sits down and puts his feet on the same chair Sam is resting his feet on. He curls his naked toes around Sam’s sock clad ones. It’s one of those small details he loves about his day since Sam started sleeping here. Small, simple touches, while he’s doing something mundane.

They’ll stop soon enough.

“I suppose a road trip will have to suffice,” he mutters, holds his plate up under his chin with one hand, and shoves egg and bacon into his mouth with the other.

Sam chuckles. “God, you’re gross. I swear, you and Dean have no table manners whatsoever. You look like a chipmunk,” he says with a fond smile, belying the supposed disgust.

“I’ve got plenty of table manners. But I’ll save them until I need them, I prefer to just be myself while at home, thank you,” Luci answers and shoves even more food into his mouth, giving Sam a full mouthed, shiteating smile.

Sam rolls his eyes at the unsavory (according to his dainty princess standards) behaviour, but he smiles when he looks down on the newspaper.

They eat in silence for a while, then Sam comments an article. “Hah! MacLeod is finally being brought to justice.”

“Oh.”

“It’s about time. That man is absolutely horrib—” Sam says then suddenly freezes. His gaze snaps up tp lock on Luci. “Please…. Tell me you didn’t?” he asks, holding his breath.

Luci hums. “I would tell you that, but I’ve promised not to lie to you, so I’m not going to.”

“Luci! How could you? You know how important these things are to me!”

“You don’t give a shit about what’s important to me, so why should I stop doing what I enjoy, just because it makes your bleeding heart cry?” Luci snipes, tone vitriolic, surprising himself with the underlying vehemence.

“What do you mean, I don’t care?” Sam questions both offended and uncomprehending. “Of course I—”

Luci cuts him off by blowing a contemptuous raspberry. The argument flares into a fight from there. Luci’s anger is a spiteful furnace. It’s possible, that this could have been a very healthy, rewarding conversation, where the two of them worked out some of the issues they’re having, if either of them had bothered listening to each other, instead of aiming to hurt.

No. Luci’s been suppressing emotions so hard, that when he lets go, they turn vicious. He’s the one aiming to hurt. Not Sam. At least not until Luci’s gained traction, sneering into Sam’s face,
delivering lines like “Well, what was I supposed to believe, darlin’? When you declared you’d do an all nighter, the moment Tom threw an arm around you and said he would pick up the tab. It’s the logical conclusion that you were doing your duty as the office Jezebel, serving yourself up to that pulchritudinous employer of yours. Maybe he thought it to be a good time to make you make up for all the time you’ve been away.”

They argue heatedly, stomping around in the house, both cat and dog making themselves scarce. His pulse is hammering so hard in his ears he can barely hear what Sam’s shouting back at him. He’s locked in a bubble of invisible cotton and spiking aggression. At one point he might have grabbed a piece of furniture, hauled it straight across the room to crash against his desk and computer. You gotta hand it to Sam. He’s not afraid. Or when he does show fear, he provokes rather than backs off.

“I don’t care about your money!” Sam shouts in response to something Luci can hardly remember saying the second before. His vision is borderline red.

“That’s fucking bullshit, Sam! I’ve been dating golddiggers my whole life, but I’ve NEVER dated anyone who cared so fucking much about my money as you do!!! And you’re constantly set on making me feel awful about my fortune, trying to make sure I despise myself for my success and luck. Well, fuck you! You’re not better than me, and I’ve fucking earned my privileges, princess!”

It’s not in any way a negotiation, a conversation, or anything but two people scrambling to find the sharpest words they can, and hurl them at each other.

One part of Luci can see what the hell he’s doing. He’s so afraid of losing Sam, that he’s pushing to make it happen. And pushing, and pushing. That same part of him wants to curl into a ball and cry for Michael, a big brother that long since deserted him, but who knew how to deal with him when he got like this.

He staggers backward from a hard shove. His cheek is throbbing and he has no recollection of being hit. No recollection of the last minute except for rage.

“Don’t touch me!” Sam shouts, lips pulled back to show his teeth.

He’s reaching for Sam again, but once again he’s shoved, Sam ducking away from him, angrily saying stuff that makes Luci want to hurt him. Something about Michael. Something about Lilith. About who knows?

The big anomaly between this fight and every other fight they’ve had, apart for the level of anger, is that Sam keeps his distance, jerks away, prevents aggression from being transformed into lust. Sam’s a beautiful snake, spitting venom and barbed remarks that tear at every insecurity Luci has.

A firm grip around Sam’s throat, pinning him to the wall, three hits in rapid succession—stopping breath, breaking skin and bruising bone. The coppery smell of regrets stinging in his nostrils. Sam’s eyes, golden hazel and green, wide and disbelieving.

You don’t hurt the ones you love.

Luci lets go and pushes himself away. He grabs his wallet and his phone, steps into a pair of shoes and heads out, slamming the door so hard it rattles on its hinges. His vision is red, the only thing he can hear is the sound of his own rapid heartbeat and his rough breaths.

This is bad…. 
Chapter End Notes

Dun-Dun-Duuuhn!
Do You Want Me Still?

Chapter Summary

Sam gets by with a little help from his friends. Also, when he thinks to himself that he likes it rough, it turns out he really likes it rough!

Do You Want Me Still?

Absence Without Official Leave

Lucifer easily deflects Sam’s punch out of the way, slams him back against the wall, pins him there with a hand around his throat and rams his fist into the wall beside him three times in rapid succession. Sam forgets to breathe. The grip around his throat is firm, but not restrictive to his windpipe. Lucifer’s eyes are black, the veins on his temples are throbbing, he’s red in the face. Every punch hits through, not on. Sam can see the white bone of a bloodied knuckle when Luci withdraws his plaster covered fist.

Luci pushes himself away, turns his back on Sam, grabs his wallet and phone, stomps his naked feet into a pair of sneakers and leaves, slamming the door so hard a picture frame falls to the floor and breaks.

The silence he leaves behind is deafening.

Sam turns his head to look at the hole in the wall where Luci’s hit through plaster and wood, just to scrape his knuckles bloody on the concrete underneath. The black eyed rage he’d seen in Luci’s eyes spoke of control lost. Just like dad. Just like Dean.

Had it been Dean, they’d be patching up each other up by now.

Had it been Dean, Sam’s face would have been the bloody part, not the wall.

But then again, had it been Dean, he wouldn’t have deflected Sam’s strike, and they’d both be sporting bloodied noses.

Sam finally remembers to suck in a deep, unsteady breath.

His pulse is racing, adrenaline surging in his veins. He’s waiting for Luci to come back and start shouting again, but Luci doesn’t come.

“What the hell just happened?” Sam asks himself and stares out on the living room. Luci had grabbed a chest of drawers from its place by the wall and hurled it at his desk. His computer screen was trashed. And the drawers were nothing but firewood. Luci had also hurled a vase at the wall. Shattering it.

Sam raises a trembling hand to cover his mouth, surveying the battlefield.

For some reason, an old domestic abuse case he’d been involved in, comes to mind. The woman
had told him, and the psychologist present, that her husband couldn’t help it. That he’d lost control and gone berserk, destroying stuff and beating her. The psychologist, who’d done a study on how to rehabilitate men who hit, told the woman he hadn’t lost control at all. To prove that, he’d asked the woman whose stuff her husband had destroyed when he went berserk. Turns out, it was always her stuff.

Like now, but the opposite. The vase that Luci found so beautiful, shattered. Luci’s computer, trashed. The chest of drawers that Luci built, broken beyond repair. But Sam’s phone, that had been lying on top of the chest of drawers before it got hurled across the room, had been moved to the bookcase beside it. There was nothing out of control about it. Luci had known exactly what he was doing, eyes black and face red be damned.

Maybe that’s scarier.

The things he’d said…

So hurtful that Sam had wanted to shy away from it. Nasty taunts. Cruel accusations that were wildly untrue. Or maybe, brushing too close to the truth?

Sam had not seen this fight coming.

Sure, they’d had a little argument the other day, but still.

He’s the one who lost control this time. Luci made a grab for him. Pulled him close, tried to kiss him—despite the cruel things Luci accused him of. Sam had slapped him, yanked himself free, shoved him.

“Don’t touch me! No wonder your brother didn’t want anything to do with you. You’re fucking delusional!”

Christ! I can’t believe I said that!

Now that the heat of the moment is starting to fade, Sam’s overcome with regret about the things he’s said. He looks to the side again, feeling a bit sick, seeing the bloodstains.

Holy shit. That could’ve been my head. How much force did he use?

His hands are shaking.

Despite Lucifer’s sometimes curmudgeonly exterior, he’s generally so sweet, it’s easy to forget that he’s been practising martial arts all his life, and still goes through a couple of forms or katas randomly almost every day. Be it some Krav Maga form or Tai Chi. Unlike Dean, who’s a street fighter a lá make-it-up-as-he-goes, and Sam, who has basically no training whatsoever except for his fights with Dean, having height and strength, and knows how to take a beating without breaking (spirit wise). Luci, has formal training, and lots of it. Staring at the busted wall, he’s frightfully reminded of that fact.

He slowly sinks down onto the floor. Luci enraged, is as familiar as breathing. He’s Dean. He’s dad. He’s Amelia and Brady. Except, he has control. Which is unfamiliar. In face of the familiar rage, Sam fell into familiar patterns. He slapped Luci. Hell, he threw a real punch, and Luci broke the God damned wall as a warning not to.

His pulse won’t stop racing. He’s still angry and hurt, but crushing guilt pours over him.

Holy shit. I’m the domestic abuser in this! How could I hit him?
Apart from the slap when Luci had grabbed him, there was no excuse—nowhere in any scenario except self-defense against physical threat, was it okay for him to use violence. (Roleplaying or martial arts practice not included.)

Oh my God. What should I do? Should I call the police and turn myself in? No. That might get Luci in trouble, if they come here and see the mess he’s made, and the bloody hole in the wall. They might think I’m covering for him. The last thing he needs is the media spotting his name in a domestic abuse case. They’d slaughter him, uncaring about the truth.

The more he thinks about the fight, the greater the guilt becomes. It’s hard to breathe, to swallow. His eyes sting. He’s shaking. He bends his forehead to rest against his knees, and hugs his legs against his chest. At first, it’s just a sniffle, but soon sob upon sob tears through his body. He feels overheated, sweaty, and overall miserable.

Something cold and wet, then warm and wet, bumps his chin. He opens his eyes to find Mikey’s head peeking in under his arm, cold nose and warm tongue nudging his face. He sniffles and lifts the dog into his lap, unable to stop crying, but comforted by the tongue licking the tears from his cheeks. “I’m sorry, Mikey. You shouldn’t be walking around here. There’s shattered glass everywhere,” he sobs. Mikey makes a pitiful little whining. It prompts Sam to check his paws, but he isn’t hurt. Just sad, like Sam. Doing something that practical eases his crying. “I didn’t get what happened? Why did he get so mad? He said I don’t care about what’s important to him. I don’t get it. Of course I care. It feels like the road turned somewhere and I kept on driving without noticing. I thought we were doing fine.” Talking to the little dog helps calm him down. Petting Mikey soothes him too. “He was so mean. Why?” He feels like he’s about to cry again. “Oh, God. I was so cruel. I didn’t mean half of the things I said to him. Not even a fourth. Why do I always do this, Mikey?” His lips wobble and Mikey lifts his head to lick at his mouth. He takes a deep breath to stabilize himself and sputters when Mikey’s tongue gets into his mouth. “Eew. Mikey, no,” he says and pushes Mikey’s nose away gently.

Luci doesn’t care if Mikey occasionally licks the inside of his mouth. When Sam makes a face and tells him that it’s gross, he just shrugs and wonders why, since there’s nothing sexual about it. As disgusting as Sam finds it, he also finds Luci’s total ease with animals—like they were just other people—utterly endearing. He just can’t get over the instinctual trust even wild animals will give Luci. Thinking about how much he loves that side of Lucifer almost sets him off again. He keeps hoping Luci will come back any second, but he remembers that time Luci stormed off in a temper last time, and didn’t come back home until the middle of the night.

He gets to his feet, holding Mikey to his chest, and goes to take his phone from the book case Luci put it in. He takes a few deep breaths to get his voice under control, then calls work. Mr. Rainsborough isn’t in, but he gets to speak with Mrs. Rainsborough. He tells her there’s been a family emergency, and that he’s going to be late, and asks if he can bring Mikey to work. He could leave the dog with Wayne. But honestly? He needs the comfort the little critter brings.

After that he puts Mikey in the specially designed backpack Luci has for Mikey, puts it on, as well as shoes, and sets out to clean up the mess Luci made. He can’t leave it. The risk of Mikey or Lucy getting shards of glass in their feet is too great. When he cleans up the splinters that was the chest of drawers, he cries again. It was something Luci had built with his own hands, and seeing it destroyed tears Sam apart.

He calls Luci four times before he goes to work, getting no answer. He texts him, with no result. He leaves a voicemail, asking for forgiveness, begging Luci to come home so they can talk it through and fix things between them.

Bringing Mikey to work is a huge success. Stiles is allergic, but nips out to buy medicine, and
probably spends more time playing with the little dog, than the rest of them together. Mikey is happily running errands in the office, bringing files and documents around, getting treats in return. He helps Layla pick up a pen she drops and then spends a lot of time in her office, helping her with stuff in exchange for kibble treats Sam handed out to his colleagues. The training they’d given the little tripod, to help Wayne out, pays off.

Mr. Rainsborough drops into Sam’s office after lunch, wearing a concerned expression. He closes the door behind him and leans against the wall with arms crossed over his chest. “Mr. Winchester, I heard you had a family emergency. Are you sure you don’t need time off from work? You don’t have any pressing cases. If you need to be with your family, we understand.”

Sam’s gut twists with guilt when he looks at his boss. The man is, like Lucifer pointed out, very attractive. And when they were out partying, Sam had seen a whole new side to him. If you disregard that he’s straight, married (which is the biggest deal breaker of them all), and his boss to boot, Sam had found himself exceedingly drawn to Rainsborough, in a way he hadn’t, before he got to know his private side. Nothing had happened of course. Sam can’t imagine ever cheating. It’s just that the thought had occurred. Just like when Charlie’s hookup had bent over the table, sticking her sexy, panty covered ass in the air. It’s arousing, and being sexually attracted to, and turned on by, anyone but his significant other, makes him feel guilty. It’s a thought crime he can’t control.

When Luci had asked him if he’d cheated, he’d felt like he’d been caught in the act, just because the thought had occurred to him. Still, the accusation was unfair. Because he could never see himself act on the attraction he feels for other people. He loves Lucifer in a way that goes way beyond sexual attraction.

“No. It’s. It’s okay. I just…” Sam takes a deep breath and runs a hand through his hair. Rainsborough’s expression is worried and sympathetic. He’s easy to trust, especially after their talk about Sam’s depression. He almost wants to spill his guts. “Look. It’s fine. I don’t need to be there. Something happened, but now it’s fine. But thanks anyway. I appreciate it. Really.”

“Oh course,” Rainsborough stands hesitating for a bit, looking at Sam like he wants to say something more, but then, thankfully, he leaves.

Sam goes about his day, anxiety crawling in his body, then hurries straight home in hope of Luci being back.

He isn’t.

Sam takes Mikey for a long walk, but Luci still isn’t home. Now the real angst starts to set in. He tries calling again. Signals go through, but Luci doesn’t answer.

He tries calling Dean, going direct to voicemail. He knows Dean’s in Argentina, but it was worth a shot.

He calls Luci’s office. Bela answers.

“Hi, Bela. It’s Sam—”

Bela cuts him off with a low, mean chuckle. “Well, well. You fucked up. Didn’t you sweetheart?” she purrs.

Sam makes a frustrated face. “Is Luci there? Can I speak to him?” he asks urgently, ignoring the jibe.

Bela snorts. “Hardly. You’ve made a mess, you might as well stew in it.”
“Come on, Bela. Please. Just put me through.”

“No can do.”

“Bela, I need to talk to him. I was wrong. I messed up. I need to tell him that.”

“Mmh. I’m sure he’d like that looped on a recording, but really, Winchester. I can’t. He’s not here. And even if he was, if he’d told me not to put you through, no begging in the world could get me to do it.”

“You know where he is?”

“Yes.”

“Where?”

Bela chuckles again. “Unless he tells you that himself, you don’t need to know. Now if you’re done wasting my time, we’re done. Goodbye.”

She hangs up in his ear.

He squeezes the phone in frustration. He almost calls her back to yell at her for being such a bitch. But then a rational part of him kicks in. Bela might be a bitch, but she’s doing a good job. Luci gets a lot of death threats. Just before he ran out, Sam tried to punch him. There’s nothing to indicate to Bela that Sam isn’t a threat. For all she knows, Sam might want to find Luci to shoot him. She’s obviously talked to Luci or she wouldn't know Sam messed up. So instead, Sam calls Charlie.

“Heya, Sammy. What’s up?”

“Hi. Um. Do you know where Luci is?”

“No. Why?”

“We had a major fight this morning and he ran out on me. He's still gone and he won’t answer my texts or calls.” His worry carries strongly through his voice.

“I thought you liked fighting.”

“Why would we like fighting???”

“You know, because of the angry sex that follows? You’re not exactly discreet about it.”

“We didn’t— He accused me of cheating so I didn’t let him touch me.”

“Frack. How bad was the fight and what were you fighting about?”

“I don’t know. He’d taken a case I didn’t like and that’s how it started, but then we fought about everything and nothing, and I don’t even know. But it was bad Charlie. Really bad. He threw furniture and I…” Sam shamefully lowers his voice to nearly a whisper, “...I tried to punch him.” Louder again, he says “He hit the wall beside my head so hard he started to bleed, then turned on his heel and left.”

“Oh frack. Fracking frack! Sam, I’m out of state. I can be home at the earliest tomorrow afternoon. Chances are, Luci won’t be home for days. Just hold the fort down and keep calm. I’ll come home to you as soon as possible, okay?”
“Do you think I should go to the police?”

“Why?”

“I tried to hit him, Charlie! That’s domestic abuse!”

“No! Whatever you do, don’t go to the police. If you do that, Luci’s going to be pissed off for real. Just, you know, keep calm and carry on. I’m coming. We’ll sort this out. Okay?”

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Mikey’s subdued all evening, lying on the couch, staring at the door. Lucy comes home late in the evening, seemingly uncaring that one of her flock is missing, more concerned about getting fed right now.

Sam has trouble falling asleep. Even with both pets at home, the house feels so empty. His thoughts keeps buzzing. Worry, anxiety, anger, regret. Most of all, he worries that Luci wants to break up with him. The more he thinks about it, the less he understands the fight. Everything had been going great until now. His mood had kept improving. He hadn’t had dark days for weeks. With Luci’s encouragement he’d reluctantly started to socialise with people that weren't only close family. He’d started participating in the stuff his friends did, not just work in their vicinity. He had fun. The sexlife was great, as well as his love life (or so he’d thought until the fight). He was doing great at work too. Maybe he didn't handle as many cases as before, but he felt like he had supported his clients better. Not just by solving their legal problems, but on a personal level. Despite that, he didn’t come home drained.

So what went wrong?

It feels like he’s missing something important.

The things Luci had said during their fight was downright cruel. True to Sam’s nature, he’d matched Luci stride for stride, something that makes him want to scream in regret.

1 AM he goes up to look for Mikey, finding him lying on the floor in front of the door. Mikey looks forlorn and keeps his gaze locked on the door. No amount of cajoling can get him to come to bed, so Sam fetches his pillow and comforter, then lies down on the floor beside Mikey. The dog rise just to lie down closer to him. He feels pathetic about lying on the hard floor, like Mikey, waiting for his master. It can’t be helped. His heart yearns.

Due to several client meetings, Mikey gets to stay with Wayne the next day. Charlie texts Sam, saying she’ll pick him up at 6 PM. Lucifer still hasn’t answered his phone or any texts.

When Sam leaves his office, both Cas and Charlie are outside, leaned against a cab.

“Hop in,” Charlie commands. “It’s time for jello shots and real talk.”

Charlie brings them to a bar Sam would never have set his foot in, without her. It’s all weirdly shaped furniture that looks like they’re made out of playdoh (that are surprisingly comfortable), bright neon lights and loud colours in every rainbow hue. Most of the people here are as colourful as the decor. Charlie fits right in, while he and Cas look wildly out of place.

On the round table (looking like some kind of mushroom) between them there’s a huge tray of different jello shots served in citrus wedges.
The sheer strangeness of the place (to Sam, at least) is actually a good distraction.

“Okay. So you had a huge fight with Luci, and he left to walk it off—” Charlie begins. She had insisted that they shouldn’t approach the topic until they got here. Sam’s beginning to think this is part of her M.O. when it comes to solving relationship crises.

“Walk it off?” Sam interrupts. “Charlie, he hasn’t been home for more than 24 hours!”

“I know. I know. He does this sometimes when he feels overwhelmed. But I know Luci, Sam. When he feels ready he’ll come back and either talk it out or act as if nothing’s happened,” Charlie soothes. “Tell us what happened. What started the fight? What did you do?”

Meanwhile, Cas is eating jello shots like they were actual fruit wedges.

“Um. Okay. So we were sitting by the breakfast table. I was reading the newspaper. As far as I knew, Luci hadn’t read the news yet. And I saw an article about MacLeod, the real estate magnate, being brought to justice. I exclaimed triumphantly about it, telling Luci, but he already knew. That’s how I got that he would be handling the case. He admitted to it and I got angry about it, since he knows I hate people like MacLeod getting away with ruining others life. Then Luci’s mood switched just like that—“ Sam snaps his fingers, “—and he said he didn’t care since I don’t care about what’s important to him. Which is absurd! Of course I care!”

“Hold on just a second, Sam,” Charlie interrupts him. “Are we talking about Fergus MacLeod, aka Crowley?”

“Yeah?”

“Okay. About a week ago Luci came home in a bad mood. He told me he’d been asked to represent Crowley and that it was one of those boner inducing cases—“

“Boner inducing?” Castiel interjects with a raised eyebrow.

“Yeah. I know it may not seem like it when Sam and he are around each other but Luci love gets excited by a good challenge rather than sex. I don’t mean that he gets an actual boner. Heh. Bet that would be awkward in a courtroom,” Charlie answers with a little snortlaugh. “But when he comes across something that seems like it’s impossible, he gets all fired up and excited and the air around him vibrates and it’s all kinds of awesome, you know?” Charlie explains without drawing breath. Sometimes when she talks, Sam thinks it sounds like she’s trying to read a full length novel in the timespan of a Vine. She simply doesn’t pause in places normal people do.

“Ah. I understand,” Cas concedes and pops another jello shot in his mouth.

“Cas. You do know there’s alcohol in these, right?” Sam asks and taps the tray between them. He’s had two, Charlie three, but the collection of empty peel wedges in front Cas is growing at an alarming pace.

Castiel’s lip quirks in the tiniest smile. “I’m well aware, Sam. But thank you for your concern.”

“Anyway, as I was saying,” Charlie breaks their off topic interlude. “He came home grumpy as frack because he’d been offered this case which is basically the kind of case he lives for and enjoys more than anything but he’d turned it down because of you,” she says and looks at Sam.

“What? When was this? I don’t remember him being in a bad mood last week.”

Charlie rolls her eyes. “Of course not, mushhead. You came home and wound your arms around him and he went all gooey like he always does. I don’t remember what day it was. He was
cooking lemon chicken and I was sitting by the kitchen table with my laptop, listening to him complain?”

“Oh. He’d turned Crowley down that day?”

“Yeah, and he was not happy about it.”

“I had no idea.”

Cas remains a silent listener.

“Yeah,” Charlie says and slurps another shot out of its peel. “So whatever sparked your fight, most likely it must have been something that happened in the timespan between. Or maybe something that has built up. You said you don’t know what you were fighting about?”

Sam takes another shot too, just to keep up. “Not really. He was really mean, and I kinda got sucked into it. Saying horrible things about his brother and him.”


“I know. I don’t know why I get like that. Look. I’ve been that way since I was a kid. Dad got mad and violent and I’d provoke, firing him on. Same when Dean and I fight. Anytime I feel unjustly accused or cornered, I turn into this mean person I friggin hate. I go for the weak points. In a courtroom I usually can keep my calm, but if not, going for the weak spots of the opposition is kinda the point, you know?” Sam complains in frustration.

“Sam. You know you’re Luci’s weak spot, right?” Charlie tells him.

“What do you mean?”

“He loves you, like, more than anything. And he still doesn’t fully believe you can want him. He thinks you’re too good for him. He pretty regularly needs me to tell him you’re really interested and that he’s not just dreaming it all.”

“Really?”

“Yeah. Like a few days ago, he texted me around 3 AM just to ask if I thought you were getting tired of him.”

“What? Why? When?”

“Um…” Charlie takes her phone up and shows Sam and Cas the particular conversation.

“Oh shit,” Sam says at the same time as Cas asks “You’re into shibari?” with a sharp gleam in his eyes.

“Yup. I’m good at it too,” Charlie answers Cas, smirking cockily, then to Sam “Oh shit?”

“I was out partying with people from work that night. I told him I’d sleep at home so he wouldn’t need to wait up for me—”

“Hah! Yeah, no. Luci doesn’t sleep much when you’re away. He usually comes in and keep me company when you spend the night at that house you own, then gets up at ass crack of dawn to run for a couple of hours. He’d have fallen asleep much more easily if you’d just said you’d be late. Or early. Or, you know what I mean. Heh. At least it explains why he texted me.”

“Wow. I didn’t know that. But when I was out with Dean, he was fast asleep when I came home,
and it was almost 4 AM?” It’s a statement, but he poses it as a question.

“Yes, but then you’d told him you’d come home so then he sleeps like a baby.”

“Oh.” Sam mulls this over. “So get this. My boss came along partying with us. It’s the first time he’s done that, right? The morning after, Luci accused me of sleeping with him. Which is crazy talk. Luci knows Mr. Rainsborough. They used to party together back in the days apparently. Luci knows he’s straight and married. I don’t get how he could think I’d sleep with him?”

“Is he hot?”

“Um.” Sam squirms and rubs his neck self consciously. “Well, yeah.”

“Then that’s it,” Charlie exclaims and snaps her fingers at him. “Luci thinks he’s hot, you said they’d partied together which means Luci probably thinks he’s a cool guy too. It wouldn’t surprise me if Luci has wanted to bone him and in that case he’ll think other people want that too.”

“Yeah, but it doesn’t change the fact that the guy is straight,” Sam says petulantly.

“He probably just needed you to put his worries that you’re leaving him to rest. Lilith really did a number on him, Sam. He’s got major trust issues and insecurities. All you need to do is to pet him and assure him you’re only his and he’ll be wrapped around your finger again,” Charlie assures him.

“Pet him?” Sam wonders, perplexed.

Cas is surprisingly the one answering. “Yes. I’ve noted that he’s very appreciative of touch.”

Charlie nods vigorously. “Exactly. You want something from him, the best thing you can do is curl up in his lap or hug him or something. Works like a charm.”

“Oh my God,” Sam mutters tiredly. If this was all some idiotic freak out about him leaving, then his reaction of pulling away must have made it ten times worse. “I need to talk with him. He won’t answer my calls. What should I do?”

“Text him. And keep texting him. He reads them, I promise. He may not answer until he got this out of his system, but text anyway,” Charlie suggests.

Eventually they leave the subject and talk about other, less anxiety inducing things. Sam takes a picture of the big pile of peels in front of Cas just as Cas is about to take another jello shot. He sends it to Luci, saying that Cas doesn’t even appear drunk yet, and that he wishes Luci was here.

He keeps it up. Sends a photo of Mikey lying forlorn on the doormat, waiting. Sends a photo of himself in their bed, looking equally forlorn. Luci is still AWOL four days later. Sam’s heart is full of darkness and grief. He’s repaired the plaster in the wall and hung a photo of the two of them over it. He’s taken his meagre savings and bought a new computer screen and keyboard for Luci, since he can’t stand to see the broken ones. He can’t afford the really expensive one Luci had, but it’s better than nothing. On the outside it’s life as usual, and Charlie’s presence helps, but inside he worries this is the end of them. But he keeps texting. Small things. Photos. Sometimes just “Miss you.” Cas prescribes him some sleeping pills to make sure he can sleep. He’s grateful. Without them, he’d be a complete wreck.

Then, finally, he gets a text.

Lucifer: Are we still a couple?
Lucifer doesn’t answer, but at least he’s alive. Sam’s a bit angry too. You don’t pull shit like this. One night maybe, but almost a full week? It’s cruel and unfair to those who love you. When Luci goes back into radio silence again after the text Sam feels even more desperate and frustrated.

On Saturday Sam’s lying on the couch, staring at a fly buzzing lazily by the ceiling. Charlie’s out somewhere, and so is Lucy. It’s just him and Mikey. Mikey waiting by the door and he on the couch.

Suddenly Mikey’s ears prick. He lifts his head, alert and listening, then shoots like a launched rocket through the cat flap. Sam sits up, heart pounding, when he hears Mikey’s high pitched screams of happiness.

*It could be Wayne, or Cas or….*

Mikey’s screams go down to a less high pitched level and instead he goes into storyteller mode. It’s when he starts making a whole range of different noises, appearing to tell whoever comes something. ‘Wau-wau-oooo-yip-yip’ he goes, then switches to happy whining.

Sam’s tense, heart thumping overtime. He sits frozen in a position of almost getting out of the couch.

The door handle moves but the door is locked. Sam’s eyes flick to the key rack where they hang their keys. Luci’s keys are there.

There’s a knock on the door. “Sam? Charlie? Are you there? I forgot my keys.”

Luci!!

Sam’s up and moving before he knows it. He turns the lock and rips up the door. Lucifer freezes his arm in mid-knock motion and stares at Sam. He’s holding Mikey to his chest with his other arm. The little dog wearing a big goofy dog grin, tongue lolling. Sam’s feeling so many things at once it’s hard to settle on a single emotion. *Relief*. Then anger at Luce for making him worry, for being mean and selfish and—, but also abatement of all the pent up anxiety and fear.

“May I come in?” Luci asks calmly. He’s not wearing the same clothes he left in. Black jeans, black boots with unknotted laces, a black T-shirt with the print *“I solemnly swear I’m up to no good* underlined by a line of shoe prints, and a backpack. He looks tired, but is more tanned than he was when he left.

Sam scrambles out of the way so Luci can come inside. Luci steps over the threshold, puts Mikey down, kicks off his boots, and drops his backpack (with the Slytherin house crest) on the floor, then closes the door. Mikey runs off to the bedroom, but comes back straight away with his favourite stuffed toy in his mouth. Instead of trotting to them with it, he jumps up in the couch and lies down to chew on his toy, looking content as can be. Lucifer remains still, looking at Sam, like he’s waiting for a reaction.

It might be just a few seconds, but it feels like minutes, while they just stand there, looking at each other, before Sam can’t take it and reaches out to touch Luci by the shoulder. Then grip. Then step in and slip his arms arms around him, pressing him to his chest and burying his nose in his hair. He smells of generic soap and travelling, but underneath that there’s a faint scent of just him. Sam inhales deeply, nuzzling down to the edge of his T-shirt. His smell is stronger there, enhanced by sweat. Sam opens his mouth to taste the skin. His heart is still beating out of control, and he feels
Luci’s pulse flutter in the same rush, under his tongue.

Luci’s been passive up until now. He sighs, shoulders relaxing, and raises his arms to hold Sam, resting his face on Sam’s shoulder. The air is heavy with tension.

“You’re such a jerk. I’ve been worried sick,” Sam whispers with rough voice, feeling close to tears.

“Do you still want me?” Lucifer asks quietly.

“Yeah, but—“ Sam answers, beginning to pull away. Luci cuts him off with a finger pressed to his lips and shushes. There’s a bandage around his hand.

“Later. Now, just… just…” Luci says, then pulls Sam back close, tucking his head in under Sam’s chin, fanning his fingers out over his back.

And, yeah. Sam might be angry, but he also wants to cling to Luci and bawl his eyes out, begging him never to leave again. He wants to be as close as it’s possible to be. Touch, taste, and feel—reaffirm their bond.

It’s a slow thing at first. Luci kisses his neck, caresses his back in careful motions, like he’s afraid Sam will pull away. Sam’s just as careful, irrationally thinking he’s just dreaming, that he’ll wake up and be alone again. Slowly, with gentle kisses, they find their way to each others lips. The kiss, while not chaste, is shy and unhurried. They’re feeling each other out, both waiting for a protest. There’s no taste of alcohol this time. Luci has been chewing gum recently, but he's sober. It’s another relief.

Eventually Sam slips his hands under Luci’s shirt and pulls it over his head. “Christ! Luci, what have you done?” Sam exclaims when he sees the bruises on Luci’s torso. There’s no doubt what kind of bruises these are. They can’t be mistaken for the bruises that sex can bring. Some are distinct knuckle marks on the stomach, and a huge bruise over the right side of his chest. They’ve begun to fade, going yellow and green.

“Don’t ask, so you won’t be able to tell.”

“Are you alright?” Sam wonders, touching the big bruise gingerly.

“Nothing’s broken. It'll fade.” Luci’s lip quirk in a little smile. He almost looks content.

I'm dating my brother, Sam thinks for the upteenth time. This too, is familiar. ‘It’s better if you don’t know,’ Dean would say when he came home with a crumpled wad of cash, letting Sam patch him up. ‘That way you won’t be able to tell no matter what they do.’

Luci doesn’t need to be patched up. At least not outwardly. Sam goes to his knees to kiss the bruises. He drags his tongue along the large one on the ribs. He can’t really say where the impulse came from, but it ignites the heated spark that’s always there between them. Luci’s skin pricks, and he makes a noise somewhere between a hiss and a growl. It sends a thrilled jolt through Sam who digs his teeth into the bruise.

Luci grabs Sam by the hair and forces him to look up. “Can I have you?” he asks with strained urgency. The way he emphasises on ‘have’, tells Sam exactly what it is he wants.

Another thrill. “Yes.” Sam’s promptly pulled up into a demanding kiss. Luci’s hands go under his shirt and stroke upward, taking it along. Sam raises his arms to help Luci pull the shirt off, barely breaking the kiss. Finally there’s heated skin against skin, Luci’s chest hair rubbing against Sam. In a fit of suppressed anger bubbling up, Sam bites Luci’s lip and digs his fingers into the bruise
on the ribs. Luci lets out a harsh breath, his lip strains into a fierce grin in Sam’s teeth, his eyes alight with sharp excitement as he pushes at Sam’s Adidas pants, trying to get them off. Sam’s other hand goes down to tug at Luci’s jeans buttons. He releases the bite to look down at what he’s doing, they make short, hurried and clumsy work of getting clothes off.

Then Lucifer’s walking him backwards, grabbing at his ass, tasting skin and dragging teeth wherever he can reach. “I want you to be my Patroclus, but you’re my fucking heel,” he snarls angrily into Sam’s skin.

Sam’s heart feels like it’s swelling ten sizes. This is how their fight should have ended. This is who they are. Anger and rampant emotions turned into intense heat and punishing need. God, he’s missed Luci’s stupid (wonderful) mythology references. Sam would love to be Patroclus to Luci’s Achilles. They’ll figure it out. But right now he wants Luci in him, on him, around him.

“Say stop. Tell me to stop,” Luci growls, digs his nails into Sam’s back, and pulls down, making nasty scratch marks. Sam utters an “Ah!” from the stinging pain, but responds by biting down on Luci’s shoulder, hard, releasing his worry and anger at Luci’s prolonged absence.

Luci actually laughs and bares his teeth in a satisfied snarling grin. Sam’s dizzy with it. This is a fight. He doesn’t want Lucifer to stop. He wants to receive and inflict the pain he’s felt emotionally this week. Whether or not it’s healthy is not a current concern. He’s excited, aroused, on fire. They stumble into the bedroom, Sam sucks a big hickey on Luci’s neck. Luci flinches when he realises what Sam’s doing. “Fuck sake!” he complains.

“Mission accomplished,” Sam says triumphantly between his teeth.

It doesn’t halt them in the least. They fall onto the bed kissing, Sam almost kneeing Luci in the process. Sam grabs the skin on Luci’s midriff and pinches it in a fist. Luci hisses and yanks his hand away by a firm grip on his wrist, pushing it onto the mattress. The other hand fists Sam’s hair. Luci’s pressing down on Sam with his body and Sam is friggin loving it, winding his legs around Luci, trying to roll him over.

“Sam, are you familiar with the traffic light system?” Luci suddenly asks, freezing their motion and staring intently down on Sam.

“What?”

“Fuck!” Luci curses, looking frustrated. He scowls, lips pressed together and eyes wide, intensely concentrated, as if he’s thinking on his feet. “The hell with it. Just say stop, or tap out and we stop, got it? And pay me the same respect. Otherwise, no bars held. Okay?” he urges.

“Got it.”

“Do your worst,” Luci challenges and dives in for a kiss.

Sam’s excitement spikes. He remembers full well their roleplaying via text all those months ago. And their angry sex has gotten increasingly rough over time, even if they’ve never talked about it.

This time, Luci talks a lot less than he usually does. He goads Sam to be rougher, or says things like “Ease up,” correcting Sam when Sam pushes something too far. Sam adheres, and Luci is, perceptive. It may seem like an uncontrolled, sexualised wrestling match, but it isn’t. Luci keeps control, which might be why he’s so quiet. Anytime a grip turns too painful and Sam start thinking ‘I can take it. Don’t be a wuss,’ to drive himself to take more than he really can, Luci will release the grip altogether and watch Sam intently. Sam can’t read Luci that well, possibly because Luci’s better at hiding when his limits are being broached. But then again, that’s when Luci tells Sam to
ease up. So Sam listens.

Sam’s so into it, that he’s the driving force, amping it up. When Luci’s holding him down to prep him, he loses patience, gets a hand down, and shoves in another finger beside Luci’s. It hurts. Of course it hurts to speed it up. But it’s Sam’s favourite kind of pain, and he’s got high tolerance for it. Very unlike Luci, who’s extra sensitive against that kind of pain.

At one time when Luci’s inside of him, pressing him down with a grip around his throat, Sam begins to panic. He can’t get air and can’t talk, his pulse rushing in his ears due to the pressure. He taps urgently on Luci’s hand and Luci lets go immediately and stills. “You okay?” he asks worriedly.

Sam sucks in a couple of deep breaths. “Yeah, yeah. Just. Air. I need it,” he pants. It’s a ridiculous thing to say and he instantly feels stupid.

But Luci just nods seriously and puts his hand around Sam’s throat carefully without squeezing. “This okay? Or off the table?” he asks with concern.

Sam puts his hand over Luci’s and squeezes until the grip is firm without restricting air or blood flow. “This is good. Not. Not preventing me to… Not restrictive. Symbolic?” Sam struggles to explain. He feels embarrassed and awkward talking about it during sex. It’s feels like he’s being put on the spot and makes him vulnerable.

Luci grunts in affirmative, lets go and lowers himself down for a kiss. “I love you, Samster. I don’t want to do anything you’re not fully on board with.”

“Oh yeah? Well I’m fully on board with you fucking the living shit out of me,” Sam says, urging Luci to go on, not wanting it to turn awkward, or lose the jagged, rough edge.

Grinning, Luci pushes himself up on straight arms above Sam. Sweat runs down his forehead and drips down on Sam. “As you wish, Hephaestion. Hold on tight,” he says, tugs Sam’s hips up in a better angle, and starts fucking him in earnest.

Sam feels his orgasm mounting. He takes his cock in hand and jerks himself off as Luci strains himself to the maximum, slamming into him hard and fast paced as if his life depended on it. The buzzing, tickling feeling in Sam’s groin gets more intense. “Hit me,” he surprises himself by saying. His cheek stings in a jolting shock from a backhand, before the command is barely out of his mouth. It’s what tips Sam over the edge. He cries out and jack knives, barely aware of anything but the waves of his orgasm washing over him.

Eyes closed, he distantly feels Luci go rigid and shudder, before falling down on his chest. They lay still, except for Luci spasming a couple of times, panting, coming down from their high.

Sam’s the first one to speak. Luci’s panting wetly against his shoulder. Sam turns his head to speak in his ear. “Your ego knows no bounds.”

“Mhm?”

“Achilles? Alexander the great?” Sam points out in amusement, both of them Luci had related to himself when he referred to Sam as their most beloved.

Luci chuckles. “Mmh,” he hums in something that might be agreement.

Another moment pass while their heartbeats slow down and breathing calms. Then Luci rolls off him and moves to get up. Sam grabs his wrist. “Where are you going?” he asks, hating the sudden desperation he feels.
“Kitchen, to get us some juice. I'll be back in a jiffy,” Luci calms him.

Sam lets go, but feels antsy and uncomfortable when he's left alone. He busy himself by cleaning himself up with a tissue from his nightstand. He can feel come leak from his ass too, but doesn’t dry himself there.

Something cold touches his sole, making him let out an undignified sound. He looks down to see Mikey’s head peek over the edge of the bed, bumping his cold nose against Sam’s foot. “Mikey, no.” He might never get used to having sex with a dog in the room. Luci couldn’t care less. The only reason Luci cared if anyone (human or animal) saw them is the risk of getting arrested. Animals don’t tell and as such were completely ignored. Sam bumps Mikey lightly on the nose with his toes to make him stop. Mikey’s head disappears below the edge of the bed. It’s enough of a distraction to keep the uneasy feeling from mounting until Luci comes back with the juice container, two glasses, and dark chocolate. To this day, Sam hasn't been able to figure out where Luci keeps his chocolate stashed.

Luci pours juice in both glasses and hands Sam one. “Here. Drink up,” he says and downs his own glass before setting it down and tugging the blanket from under Sam. “You want clothes?”

Sam makes a denying gesture with his hand while drinking.

Luci throws the blanket over Sam to cover him, pours himself another glass, takes the glass and chocolate, and walks around to his side. He puts the glass down on his nightstand and crawls into bed and under the blanket, scooting closer to Sam so he lies pressed up against his side. He opens the chocolate bar, breaks it in half and hands Sam half. “Eat.”

Sam chuckles and takes it. “Yes, Sir.”

Luci makes a face and tsstks. “I'll never be Sir to you. We’re equals. Is that clear?” he says, tips over to his side to give Sam a quick kiss before biting off a large piece of chocolate and chewing so his cheek bulges.

Sam nearly yessirs again just to tease him, but refrains. It feels like it's a much bigger statement than a joke merits. Maybe it’s because Sam likes being held down, manhandled, and fucked in a way that he thinks should feel degrading, but doesn’t. And it's probably the underlying feeling of respect from Luci that keeps it from ever feeling that way, even when Luci does things like holding him by his hair and gagging him on his cock. “Yeah, alright,” he answers instead and nibbles on the bittersweet chocolate.

Luci crams his chocolate into his mouth and eats like chewing is an annoyance best avoided. He seems to want to get eating over with as soon as possible. When the last piece is in his mouth he crinkles the packaging paper into a ball and throws it towards the doorway. There’s a scrambling sound from the floor, then Mikey jumps onto the bed with the paperball in his mouth, stubby tail happily wagging.

Both Sam and Luci laugh. “Good boy, Mikey. Show daddy that you shouldn’t throw trash on the floor,” Sam praises and pets Mikey’s head.

“I was going to clean it up on my way out,” Luci defends himself, sniggering, and takes the ball from Mikey. He leans away to put it on the nightstand.

It’s one of Sam’s pet peeves, living with Luci. Eating in bed, and throwing trash on the floor in the vague direction of the nearest trash can when he can’t be bothered to get up. It’s not a major issue, since Luci always picks it up as soon as he gets up. But it’s slightly annoying anyway.
Mikey lies down beside Sam and rolls over on his back, asking for belly scratches. Sam obliges the dog, trailing his fingers lightly back and forth over the dog’s belly and chest while nibbling on his chocolate.

Luci leans back and hitches his leg over Sam’s, then trails soft fingers over the marks and bruises visible on Sam’s torso not covered by the blanket. He nuzzles Sam’s cheek, red and still burning from the backhand Sam asked for. Sam likes it. He savours the burn on his cheek, in his ass, and on his back.

“We need to talk about what we just did. Because this can’t happen again. Not like this,” Luci says, placing butterfly kisses on a bite mark on Sam’s shoulder.

“What? Why not? I liked it and so did you. What we need to talk about is our fight, and you going AWOL for a week,” Sam counters.

“Yes. And we will talk about it too. But we’ll address this first, because we’ve been heading for this kind of sex since before we were even dating, and without talking it through, it can go horribly wrong. I’ve got triggers and so do you,” Luci answers mildly, lips curved in a soft smile while his fingers keep caressing Sam’s blemishes lovingly.

“Addressing our fight is more important.”

“Oh, I agree, darling. But I still have an excess of adrenaline and testosterone in my body and I believe bringing up the cluster fuck of a fight we had, might needlessly make my temper flare again. But I will say that I was cruel and provocative, letting my insecurities get the better of me. For that, I'm sorry. I don’t regret everything I said, but I do regret how I delivered it. The love I hold for you is so strong, it makes me scared and weak. I really want to get past the problems we have. I hope you want that too. And if you do, I ask of you to let it rest a few more hours, until we’re both calm, have full bellies, and are sitting fully dressed by the kitchen table or on the couch. Could you do that for me? For us?”

“Yeah. I guess that isn't too much to ask.” Sam answers and find himself smiling. His emotions are a bit wobbly too, and he can see the benefits of discussing their fight like Luci proposes. It’s a setup that elevates the chance of success of solving their issues.

Luci smiles back and leans in for another kiss. He steals a piece of the chocolate Sam has in his mouth, swiping it with his tongue. Sam chortles and shoves at his shoulder. The anxiety he had brewing when Luci left the room has simmered down and dissipated. He feels good, and oddly shaky. Almost clingy. The close contact and soft caresses keeps him grounded. “I'm sorry I hit you,” Sam says, referring to the fight. “There’s no excuse.”

Luci actually laughs. “Oh, hon, I don’t mind getting a punch or two. To me, that part isn’t even a problem. The problem is what led us to reach that point where fists and drawers went flying. But let it rest, and let’s talk about the angry hate-sex we just had.”

Sam sniggers. There are bruises, bite marks, and blemishes all over their bodies. Aching memorandums that Sam treasures. “Okay.”

“Thank you, darling. Do you remember that I told you about BDSM?”

“Yeah?”

“According to good BDSM conduct one should never scene when in a state of emotional turmoil. That shit won't work for us, for obvious reasons.”

“But we weren't sceneing, or roleplaying?” Sam cuts in.
“True. But a whole bunch of BDSM guidelines still apply to us. When we go rough like this we require trust, respect, and a level of control. Even if we’re pissed off at each other. And I need to know your limits, our limits. You don’t tell me when I go too hard. You *should*. But you don’t. Which is a problem. And this?” Luci lays his hand around Sam’s throat gently, mimicking the grip he’d taken while they fucked. “I shouldn’t discover it in the heat of the moment, just like it would be catastrophic if you discovered that when I’m completely restrained, I get so claustrophobic that I lash out in pure panic, defending myself. Considering how trained I am at fighting that could end very badly for us. If we have a safeword in place, or preferably to me, the traffic light system, we can alert each other quickly if we’re overstepping or nearing it. Considering how much we both like rough sex, I’d say a safeword system is in order. And you’ve got to admit, what we just did goes beyond what’s normally classified as rough sex,” Luci says with a self-satisfied smirk and pokes a finger at a dark bite mark bruise on Sam’s pec.

Sam chuckles. “Yeah. Sounds good to me. But does it really apply to angry sex?”

“Why shouldn’t it? I for one am capable of holding myself back even when I’m angry. And when I feel myself slipping I leave. Like when we fought. My vision was literally red, and my pulse was so loud I could no longer hear you.”

“I’m sorry I tried to punch you.”

Luci tssks. “As far as you knew, I was a threat. I was throwing furniture around, baby. You might assume I’d be aiming at you next, and you hadn’t seen me that angry before. You know what I think we should do? I think we should implement the traffic light system in our daily life for a while, so it becomes a backbone reflex to adhere to it.”

“So how does it work?”

“If you say the word ‘green’, it means you’re totally into what I’m doing. Regardless if you’re resisting me, making pain noises, or otherwise seem not to be enjoying yourself. If you say ‘yellow’ it means slow down, you’re not comfortable, or find it a bit weird. It means to not push it further, or maybe try some other way of doing whatever. You’re not opposed to what’s going on, but not really appreciating it either. ‘Red’ means stop whatever you’re doing, *right the fuck now*. Both of us can just say the word ‘colour’ if we find ourselves uncertain of each other’s feelings about something we’re doing.”

“Sounds like a good system. I think I’d like that.”

“Safe, sane, consensual. That’s the motto. If you’d ever want to make reality of that roleplaying fantasy of yours, it’s a requirement from my side. For any dubious roleplaying we might get up to.” Lucifer smiles and kisses Sam’s chest. He blows gently on Sam’s skin, giving him goose pimples. “I don’t want to harm you. Hurt you? Yes. But not harm.”

“Me neither.” Sam’s blushing slightly at the mention of the rape fantasy they’d played out in texts, but he feels calm and safe. Luci doesn’t judge. It’s about them, and making them work better. They lay talking about sex for a long time. Luci with his head on Sam’s chest or shoulder, Mikey, snoring, belly up on Sam’s other side, while Sam scratches Mikey’s belly absently and caresses Luci softly, and Luci touches Sam just as gently, if you don’t count how he’s octopussed his leg over Sam. Eventually all the talk about likes, dislikes, no-gos, and outright firestarters demands its tribute. Gentle touches turns to soft kisses and caresses under the blanket, followed by sappy declarations of love, and slow, sweet lovemaking of a diametrically different type than their previous go. They fall asleep afterwards, and Sam wakes up when Lucy comes home and decides to greet the former absentee by laying on his face and purr. Lucifer’s curses aside, Sam feels happy now that the whole family is back together.
Chapter Summary

So many conflicts in life could be avoided if people were just honest and talked to each other. For once, Sam and Luci do.

Chapter Notes

The title of this chapter is taken from a song. For all you youngins out there. Welcome to me falling into nostalgia of crappy music. I still love this lousy song by happy memories alone. ^^’ Some old school happy music from 1990. You can cringe at it here on YouTube and Spotify.

What’s the Colour of Love?

Rebuilding in the Ruins of Ancient Battlefields

Sam goes to the bathroom, and when he comes back he finds Luci in the living room, holding the framed photograph of the two of them to the side and touching the bare plaster where Sam repaired it. He gently hangs the picture straight again and walks over to his computer. He runs a finger over the top edge of the screen, then touch the new keyboard too. Sam doesn’t think Luci’s aware he’s watching from the hallway, but Luci proves him wrong. “Did you or Charlie buy me this?” Luci asks.

“I did.”

Luci makes a dissatisfied face. “These are fairly expensive, above your budget.”

Sam stands straight, crossing his arms over his chest defensively. “I couldn’t afford the models you had before, but I got the next best thing.” He feels accused and offended. Luci could show a little bit of gratitude even if it isn’t his usual standard.

Luci sighs with a bitter twist to his mouth, rubs a hand over his hair and walks up to Sam. He rests his forearms on Sam’s shoulders, leans his forehead against Sam’s and closes his eyes. “Thank you, dear. I don’t mean to be ungrateful,” he says, as if he’s reading Sam’s mind. “But when we talk about why we fought, later on, you’re going to have to explain to me why it’s okay for you to buy me a gift that must have costed at least 20% of your accumulated savings, when it isn’t okay for me to give you things that doesn’t even make a %e dent in my fortune, because I honestly don’t understand it, and it’s wearing on me.”

Oh.

Sam hadn’t thought about it that way. And the top notch screen and keyboard had costed about
60% of his savings, but he’s not going to tell Luci that. The fact that he’s dating Luci, and that Luci’s taken over such a great part of his expenses, like food, the car, and hygiene products, is what’s allowed Sam to put away savings to begin with.

Sam untangles his arms and slip them around Luci’s waist to hold him in an embrace. He’s here, all warm and solid. Almost a full week without him has been heart shattering and torturous. And Luci’s request of talking things through when they’re as calm as can be, is a good one. But it’s hard not to dive straight into talking about it right now. Although… “How’s your hand? I saw bone when you hit the wall.”

“It’s fine. I don’t really need the bandage anymore,” Luci answers and takes a short step away, Sam’s hands falling down to rest on his hips while Luci starts unwrapping his bandage. “I’ve kept it bandaged not to freak people out, because it doesn’t look pretty. I think I cut myself on a wood shard. It didn’t slice the skin clear off. After I’d washed it, I just flipped the skin back in place, fixed it there with some surgical tape, and let it set. It’s healing well. It’ll become a scar, but it’s no worse than I’ve gotten while doing carpentry, house repairs, or yard work. See?” He holds up his stripped hand so Sam can see. There’s a healing crescent over one knuckle, the two next to it are scabbed over with scrapes, and the whole knuckle area is a big bruise shifting colour between purple in the most intense places, then greenish, and yellow. It’s no longer swollen as it must have been the first couple of days. The surgical tape has been removed once the wound was healed enough to hold itself together. Sam removes one of his hands from Luci’s hips, takes Luci’s damaged hand, and lifts it to his lips to kiss it gently.

Luci tilts his head and looks at him with the softest little smile, eyelids lowered. “You shouldn’t reward me for being a dick, darling.”

“I’m supposed to love you the most when you deserve it the least, because then you need it the most. Isn’t that what they say?” Sam says with a warm smirk.

Luci tssks. “Sometimes you’re in danger of turning me into a complete sap. Now come on. Let’s go make dinner. I for one, am starving.”

Sam’s belly decides to rumble at the mention of food. They both laugh. “Yeah. It seems my belly agrees.”

They make dinner together. Sam keeps thinking about what Charlie and Cas said about Luci and touch. It makes him acutely aware of how much Luci’s touching him. And it’s not more than usual, he just registers it in the forefront of his mind. Like brushing his hand while handing things over, a hand in the small of his back while reaching for things close to Sam on the counter, standing close enough for their shoulders to brush if they’re side by side. It’s as innocuous as the way he’ll curl his toes around Sam’s when they’re sitting opposite of each other. And that’s not counting the bigger signs of affection, like hugs, nuzzling, and kisses. It makes it stand out to Sam how he’d withdrawn in the squabble in the car and during their fight, both times when he’d felt unjustly accused.

Sam’s standing behind him, holding him, while he’s stirring the sauce pot. He sniffs Luci’s hair and stares at his neck, beautifully tanned. “So how come you’re so tanned? We’ve had rain and overcast skies while you were away. Where did you go?”

“Sardinia. Then the Canary Islands.”

Sam tenses up, but doesn’t let Luci go. “You went to Europe?”

Luci sighs and twists around in his grip, he slips his arms around Sam and sidesteps them so he can lean against the counter rather than the stove. The look on his face is tired and regretful.
“Look, Sam. I’ve told you before, that when I’m punished for a wrongdoing I’m not guilty of, I’m going to commit it. It’s not a nice trait of mine, I know.”

“But I haven’t punished you for anything?” Sam says, baffled.

Luci hums. “Maybe not. But it’s felt like it. In here,” he says and briefly lets go of Sam with a hand to pat his chest. He slips his arm around Sam again, as soon as he’s stopped the gesture. “You know what they say, darling. Where there’s anger, there’s always pain underneath.”

Sam finds himself smiling. He’d tweeted that, just the other week. It’s funny how he hadn’t put it in perspective to them. “Yeah. You’re right.” Then his smile is traded for a little concerned frown. “But you shouldn’t leave the country like that without letting anyone know. Something could have happened to you and you’d be on the other side of the world.”

“Bela and Dean knew. I talked to Bela daily due to work, and Dean about every other day.”

It doesn’t sit well with Sam that Luci spoke with Bela while he refused to speak with Sam, but there’s a choice of things to latch onto in that statement, and he chooses to latch onto the less volatile part. “Dean? How? His phone’s been switched off all this time.”

“You don’t have his temporary phone number? Oh fuck. Huh. I was wondering why he never chewed me out about the fight. I figured you hadn’t wanted to spoil his mood since he’s having such a blast. I’ll give his number to you.”

“But shouldn’t he have wondered why we weren’t together?”

“Mmh. I cut a few corners with the truth when I spoke to him. Believe it or not, I do know when I’ve done something that will get me yelled at. I didn’t exactly lie. I told him I had a big case coming up and that I wanted a little vacation before it started, that I asked you to come along and that you declined. I just failed to mention that we had a major fight and that I ran out on you.”

Luci smirks but the look under his heavy eyelids are still sad and tired.

“But you really have to take the Crowley case? Charlie said you’d declined it already. For me.”

“No. I’ve given him my word and I keep my promises. But for future reference, Sam, I’m going to take these cases when they come along. Whether they’re for a good cause or not. I don’t care enough about the stranger affected, and I fucking live for the thrill I get in the courtroom. You knew this about me beforehand. I really shouldn’t have to change that, if you truly love me.” Luci sounds so pleading it actually hurts inside Sam.

Sam leans his forehead against Luci’s. “You don’t have to change that. I mean, I might get angry at you. But I get it. I do. And angry or not, it’ll pass. But you had already turned MacLeod down, right?”

“I had. It didn’t stop my mind from getting on the case, doing research, planning, figuring out both defence and offence. I really wanted the case, baby.”

Sam mulls this over. Luci frees himself of Sam and turns back to the stove to stir so the sauce doesn’t get burnt, and stick to the bottom of the pot. “Say…. When you say that you really want something, that’s it?”

Luci turns his head to frown at Sam in confusion. “How do you mean?”

“Um… Like if you compare to Dean, he’d say,” Sam shifts his body language and tone to mimic his older brother, “‘Pleasepleaseplease, Sammy, come ooon! I really, really, really want this. Please. Be a good bro. Do it. For me?’”
Luci sniggers silently, eyes crinkling at the corners, icy blue warming up and sparkling with mirth, shoulders shaking and puffs of air coming out in amusement. “That sounds about right.”

“So when you say that you really want something, you mean you want it as much as Dean does when he resorts to pathetic groveling and hardcore begging?”

Luci laughs. “I suppose so. It depends on what’s at stake. I could resort to Dean’s type of tactics if I don’t actually care if I’m being rejected or not, or how I feel about the person I’m trying to convince. And it’s a matter of balancing respect when there are conflicting interests to consider. When I love someone, their choices are of great importance to me. Dean and Charlie have no qualms when it comes to bullying their loved ones to get their will. Believe me. If they had, I would never had gone to my first comic con, and certainly not while cosplaying.” He winks impishly as he takes the potatoes of the stove to pour the water away.

Sam goes around him, making a point out of touching his back when he passes, and takes the steaks from the pan to transfer them to a serving plate. “Okay. Because I’ve been mulling over our fight, and what you said about not caring about what’s important to you. It’s not true. I care a lot. It’s just that, I think that maybe you haven’t made it clear when something really was important to you? I feel really guilty, and ashamed, for missing it. But I can’t read minds. And I’ve had a lot on my plate that’s…” He falters. When he thinks about what he’s trying to say, he feels so God damned small and pathetic. It’s embarrassing, despite Luci knowing what’s up. Luci has shut off the stove and is listening with a keen and focused expression. Sam wants to shy away from it and change subject. He hates feeling weak and pathetic.

“How do you feel right now. Give me a colour.”

“Um. Green? More like yellow actually,” Sam answers when he gets what Luci’s asking for. He gives Luci a lopsided little smile. Putting colour to the feeling of unease is easier than putting words on it. He takes a deep breath and goes on. “I’m talking about my depression. I feel pathetic, but for a while it was really hard for me to go out of the house if I didn’t have anything to hide behind. Like work. At work I’m not really me, you know? I’m lawyer Winchester, here to help. And being out with you, Dean, or any close friends, it’s like having crutches. Running is also safe. Clears my mind, right? But remember when I went to the beach to take a stroll by myself the first time?”

Luci nods. He goes about setting the table, but keeps his main focus at listening to Sam.

“I did not want to do that. Hell, it’s so embarrassing to admit this, but I had anxiety crawling all over. I felt completely naked and, I dunno, like I was wearing a target on my back. I had to remind myself to breathe and not to start running. I couldn’t wait to get back home to you. And it’s, it’s dual, right? Because part of me wants to get back to you, because you’re safe, you know? But part of me also wants to get back to you because it’s much nicer to do things together. I want you along, not just like a safety blanket, but because I love you and enjoy your company. Things are much better with you around.” Sam gestures with his hands while he talks. “But it feels like, like it’s something I need to do. Be out and about without a purpose, or a cover. Like,” he snaps his fingers, “like going for coffee after a group therapy session, or go for beers with my workmates, right? It’s the simplest thing in the world. Or it should be, right? But the first times, I could hardly make myself stay put. And I like these people. Despite that, being with them outside of work or therapy put me at,” he chuckles, “at orange levels of discomfort.”
“Really? I had no idea, Sam,” Luci says and grabs two beers from the fridge. He uncaps them and hands one of them to Sam.

Sam makes sure to put his hand over Luci’s when he takes it, to get as much contact as possible. For both their benefits. He takes a sip. “Yeah. It’s stupid. The first night I went out for an after work beer with Stiles, Layla, and Jacob, I had to pretend I had an upset stomach just because I had to go hide in the toilet so often to calm myself down. But you’ve all encouraged me to do these things, and it feels like I have to for my own sake. And, and, it’s working, right? I’ve finally started to recognise myself again. I’m starting to be able to enjoy myself while doing these things on my own, without feeling exposed and anxious. And that’s happened only this last month.”

They sit down to eat, putting food on their plates. As if called by magic, they can hear Mikey’s claws quickly click over the floor towards the kitchen. Sam notes that it's time to trim his claws, or they wouldn't have been so easily heard on the floor.

“I really wish you'd told me this earlier. Maybe then my own insecurities wouldn’t have gotten the better of me,” Luci laments, cuts a piece of steak, and puts it in his mouth, completely ignoring Mikey's attempts at looking like he’s starving.

“Yeah. But… I’m a grown man. I’m ashamed of the fact that taking a friggin walk amongst people could, can make my heart race in fear. Look. I know that the fear I feel, is irrational. It’s not like I’m afraid I’ll get attacked by someone. It’s...” Sam searches for words while he pauses to put some food in his mouth. Luci’s naked toes curl around his under the table. For once, he’s barefoot too. Luci prefers being barefoot. He likes to be barefoot both indoors and outdoors. He likes feeling the ground and different textures under his toes. He’ll dig his toes in under the sand while at the beach, or pull up grass with them if he’s sitting barefoot on a picnic at the park. Sam's not as keen on it. He prefers shoes or socks when he’s up and about. Luci had given him a pair of fuzzy socks that are incredibly soft, and he loves them, despite the hardcore teasing Dean would put him through anytime he spots Sam wearing them. But now they’d just pulled on sweatpants and tees when they got up.

“So get this,” Sam starts once he’s chewed. “I know that the problems I have is because of chemicals in my brain not being produced properly. And I’ve tried anti-depressants in the past, right?”

Luci nods. This is nothing new.

“So what’s left to do, is trying to kickstart the production of these chemicals by positive thinking. It sounds cliché. It is. But it’s really hard to do, right? So when I do these exercises, like taking a walk on the beach, I want my success and positive experiences to be reinforced. Coming home to you, is a reward. I don’t want to tell you that I sat in the car trying to remember how to breathe properly before I managed to get out. I don’t want to tell you that my hands were completely numb for at least half of my walk. I looked around trying to find something nice to bring home to you. The incredible colour of the sea, that gull that stole a hotdog, that toddler that couldn’t stop laughing at a crab. Little things. And I focused on them. Then when I came home, I told you. And it reinforced the positivity. So the next time I went to the beach alone, it was less scary. But when I think about not being able to go for a walk by myself without having an internal freak out, I feel useless, weak, and pathetic. And I don’t want to reinforce that by telling you I feel that way. Not when I’m getting better.”

“That makes perfect sense, Sam. But I still wish you would have told me that’s why you didn’t invite me to come along. I want you around even when I’m at my worst mood, because it feels like at least one piece of the puzzle is in place when you’re around. I was beginning to think you found me clingy. That you were tiring of me. I’m thinking that you don’t need me anymore, or want me, now that you’re back on your feet.”
“Jesus Christ, Luce. That’s as far from the truth as you can get! I keep falling deeper in love with you with every new thing I uncover about your personality. Sure, I get angry and frustrated at you. You can be a real asshole. You’re arrogant, and you eat like a pig more often than not unless we’re in public.”

Luci sniggers. “Hey, all animals are equal, but the pigs are more equal than the others,” he jokes, referencing George Orwell’s The Animal Farm, and puts a too big piece of meat in his mouth, chewing with a mock-lofty expression.

Sam laughs. “Yeah, yeah. The point is, you do have qualities that peeve me, but even some of those are endearing to me. Sometimes I don’t know if I should say ‘Eww’ or ‘Aww’. They aren’t things I really want to change about you, because I love them. Just like I love my asshole brother. Well, *not* the same way, obviously. But you get me, right? There are so many layers to you, and the better I feel inside, about myself, the more I appreciate you, since I’m no longer preoccupied with getting through the day without having an episode or whatever you like to call it.”

Luci bends his neck and looks down on his plate, smiling to himself. “Suck up,” he mutters and gives Sam’s toes a little squeeze.

Sam chuckles. There’s a little lull in their conversation while they focus on their food. Steak, potatoes, sauce, and a salad. Sam’s the one sneaking meat to the dog. Luci gives Mikey sliced bell peppers from the salad. He can’t do it discreetly because it crunches too much when Mikey chews, giving him away. Luci finishes his beer and gets up to get another one. “You want one?” he asks.

“Yes, please,” Sam answers and drains the last of his beer too.

Luci comes back to the table, puts the beer in front of Sam, leans in to steal a kiss, then sits down at his place again.

“Was it because you thought I was tired of you that you accused me of cheating?” Sam suddenly asks.

“I didn’t *accuse* you, Sam. I asked a simple yes or no question. But then you refused to give me an answer and I started getting antsy for real, thinking this was the end.”

“Oh. Well it felt like an accusation. And it was very badly timed. My stomach was roiling, I had a nasty headache, and my head was still spinning. I felt like shit. I haven’t cheated on you. And I felt very offended that you’d think that. My reaction was maybe over the top, but I was already feeling miserable and that kinda tipped the scale.”

Luci grunts noncommittally in response and cleans up the last food on his plate, shoving it into his mouth. But his foot comes back to grip Sam’s.

“Um… but…” Sam lays down his utensils to grab his beer to pick at the label. “But I reacted so strongly, in part, because I also felt guilty.” Sam doesn’t look at Luci. He keeps his focus on the label he’s picking at.

“Uh-huh,” Luci says flatly.

“Yeah, because while I didn’t cheat on you, I did see a new part of my boss that I hadn’t seen before. I found myself attracted to him, thinking that if I hadn’t met you, and he had been single and swinging my way, I would have been interested. It happens sometimes, that I get turned on by or am attracted to others, and it makes me feel bad. I love you, and I’ve got no interest in actually doing anything with anyone else. But sometimes, the thought comes up and it makes me feel like
I’ve cheated.” Sam’s mouth is dry from nerves, making this confession.

“That’s it?”

“Yeah.” Sam takes a swig of the beer to get some moisture back in his mouth.

Luci sniggers, drawing Sam’s attention to him. Luci’s leaning back in his chair, looking amused. “Well, darlin. In that case I can let you know, that if I hadn’t given you an explicit promise of fidelity, I would have banged Tom like a drum if he let me. He’s very handsome, and when he lets go of that goody two shoes, Christian facade, he’s quite a charmer.”

Sam stares at Luci in shock. This is not what he’d expected.

“But I have given you my word to be faithful to you, and I will keep that promise for as long as we are a couple,” Luci goes on. “Incidentally,” he says and points at Sam with his bottle. “That’s why I texted you to ask if we're a couple or not. At the time there was a very beautiful Italian woman making it clear that she was interested in becoming a notch in my bedpost. Had you said ‘no’, I would have fucked her. But you didn't. So I didn’t.”

Jealousy bubbles up inside of Sam. His mind instantly starts painting him graphic pictures of the event going down. “Did you kiss her?”

Luci snorts in amusement and takes a swig of the beer. “No. That too would have been a breach of our fidelity clause, wouldn’t it?”

“Yeah.”

“Then we're on the same page. I only talked to her, bought her a couple of drinks, and enjoyed the view.”

“What would you have done if I didn't answer straight away?” Sam’s trying not to sound pissy. He really is. But he doesn’t fully succeed.

“Nothing. Nobody’s worth risking losing you over. I wasn't sure if I still had you, but on the off chance that I did, I would have kept my fidelity to you.”

Sam compresses his lips. He really wishes he didn’t feel so jealous. Luci wouldn’t have told him this if he’d cheated. He doesn’t think Luci’s lying. He trusts him. But the feelings still burn, and he hates the random, unknown Italian woman who had gotten Luci’s attention. Feelings aren’t rational.

“Sammy. There are loads of beautiful, sexy people out there, who are going to wake up our libido. We are animals with instincts. But we aren't ruled by those instincts. If we were, we'd run around dry humping anyone who caught our fancy. We choose our actions. You mean so much more to me than sex. And to be honest, the thought of you wanting somebody else, and turning them down for me,” Luci clicks his tongue with an almost feral smirk, nostrils flaring, “pleases me.”

Luci practically purrs those last words, squeezing Sam’s toes with his own.

The sharp possessive gleam in his eyes thrills Sam and tones down his jealousy. “Okay, I can get behind that thought.”

“Mh. So you can stop feeling guilty. I’ve been taking for granted that you would be attracted to others. It doesn’t in any way lessen what you feel for me, I presume. Because no attraction I feel for others can diminish how I feel for you. We should be judged by our actions, not our thoughts.”

“But how come…” Sam shifts, collecting his thoughts. “Don’t you trust me not to cheat?”
Luci shrugs. “I want to. Believe me. And I try. But after the shit Lilith pulled… Look, Sammy. I'm an all-in kind of guy. Even taking all the risks into consideration, I commit myself to you a 100%, just like I do with everything else in life. It makes me nervous that you don’t do the same.”

“What do you mean? I'm fully committed to you.” He feels a bit hurt, hearing that Luci doesn’t think so. But he keeps his expression open and his voice curious. This isn’t about defending oneself, it’s about understanding each other so the fight won’t repeat itself.

Luci rubs his neck, then takes a sip of his beer. “I know that I'm rushing into this. But it feels right, so why hold back? And you started sleeping here and treating this as your home straight away. I love that. But then you keep pointing out that you. Don’t. Live. Here. Time after time, reminding me that this is nothing but a temporary liaison, no matter how much I wish for it to last for life. And you don't want me to move in with you either. Always with one foot on the dock, ready to jump off the boat. Even more so, since you refuse to accept any valuable gifts or let me pay expenses if…” Luci takes a deep breath. “I gather that you don’t want to feel indebted to me when you leave, but—“ Luci’s mouth snap shut mid sentence. He turns his head away sharply, lips compressed, nostrils flaring, blinking rapidly.

It’s like a painful gut punch. Luci had said something about having one foot on the dock that day when he'd been pissed off and run out on Sam and Charlie. But when Sam had asked what he meant he'd been hushed and told they’d take it up some other time. How, how, how was Sam supposed to know he felt like this if he never said anything? Sure, Luci kept dropping offhanded remarks about Sam’s house. Particularly within bad context. ‘I need to fix the dripping tap’ - ‘sell’, ‘I should really go home and vacuum’ - ‘sell’, and so on and so forth. The suggestion to rent it out was a pretty good one, but Sam hadn’t had the time to think it over and then came the fight.

It must have been awful to go around thinking Sam’s one step away from leaving him all the time. Sam’s heart clenches at the thought. He wishes he could know exactly how hard it was for—

“Colour?”


“Blood orange?” Sam jokes.

Luci utters a pained little laughter. He looks back at Sam with a tiny smile. “Yes, darling. That’s about right. You’re not the only proud one of us. I feel very vulnerable talking about this, Sam. Some of your behaviours towards me are textbook examples of what Lilith did. I know you’re not like her, not trying to swindle me. I trust Charlie on this too. But the feelings of insecurity it brings, stems from what she did. The fight we had, was a symptom of me failing to control those emotions.”

Sam gets up from his chair and moves to the chair closest to Luci. He grabs Luci’s chair and pulls at it so they're face to face, knees brushing. He puts his hands on Luci’s thighs and leans forward to really hammer home his sincerity. “Luce. If I try to envision myself 50 years from now, I see myself with you still by my side. I've never for a second considered leaving you for any reason. You might be the best thing that has happened to me if you don’t count my brother. Me holding off on officially moving in has nothing to do with not wanting to spend my life with you. Look. To me, our relationship is going warp speed. I’m used to date two to three times a week for a couple of months before we took it further. Sarah and me, she moved in a bit faster because the the company she worked for downsized after a merger. She lost her job and couldn’t keep her apartment.”

“But you're already living here,” Luci whines almost desperately.
“I know, but…” Sam draws a deep breath. “Look. First off, selling a house, emptying it of furniture, cleaning it meticulously, everything that needs to be done… I felt like I needed to focus on my mental health, rather than add another huge point of stress. And there’s two other things. About moving in. I’ve never… I’ve never really liked moving in to someone else’s home, or have them move into mine. It’s like, the balance is wrong. Dean and I have lived on top of each other for so long, it’s made me guard my space and my things very keenly. Dean’s not like that. He’s like, ‘what’s yours is mine’, snooping, borrowing stuff without asking, doing pranks like rubbing my toothbrush under his armpits to mess with me. And he often brought strangers over. I don’t mind sharing a living space, but I need space that is purely mine. That’s why me and Sarah bought the house. I felt intruded upon with her moving in, so getting a place that was ours, together, was imperative. And even then I demanded an extra room that was just mine. She had gotten a new job, and we got this house that was a bit too expensive for my budget, but worked well with our combined incomes. We could have gotten something smaller if I didn’t need a space of my own.”

Luci tilts his head and scrunches up his face in that way he does when he doesn’t quite grasp something. “You’re never there.”

Sam smiles softly. “Yeah, but I could be. Which is the important part. And you don’t grate on me the same way Sarah did sometimes. Neither does Dean, Cas or Charlie. Maybe Charlie might have, had she not cooped herself in her room with her computer as much as she does. It’s stupid and I can’t explain why, but I love having a full house, and at the same I need private space.”

“It’s not stupid, and you just explained it perfectly fine. You need privacy but don’t like to be alone. A house with people in it has a living feel to it. I know the difference, Sam. Charlie left and the house died. We could go days where we’d barely meet long enough to say hello in the mornings when she’d been up all night and I just got up to go to work. But when I came home I could still feel her presence, even if she was sleeping. I presume you and Dean had that while you lived together too.”

“Exactly. But there’s another thing holding me back too, that ties into this a bit. I can’t help it but…” Sam halts and looks down on Luci’s lap. He swallows audibly. “I try not to think about it. But I can’t help it. I, um…” Briefly he glances up to meet Luci’s intent gaze. He moves his hand to take one of Luci’s hands and lace their fingers together, studying Luci’s sturdy, work worn hand contrast to his smoother, long fingered one. “I keep thinking. I keep wondering what will happen if you die. I, uh. I’m sure Charlie wouldn’t throw me out or anything. But what would I do? Where will I go? I’m sure Dean and Cas will take me in, but. It’s. It’s hard for me. I mean. It seems the curse is broken and all. But the thoughts still come. I’ve seen too many of my lovers as corpses. Been to too many funerals. It sticks with me. And maybe. Maybe part of me is holding back on selling and moving in, because some irrational part of me thinks I can fool fate.”

“I don’t believe in fate. I like to believe we are masters of our own lives. And I will die, Sam. Everyone dies. Hopefully it won’t happen for many, many years to come, but it will happen.” Sam looks up to meet Luci’s soft gaze. Luci reaches out his free hand to comb a lock of hair out of Sam’s face with his fingers. “But if the worst should happen and I perish too soon, I’ll tell you what will happen, darling. You need to know one thing for starters. Neither I or Charlie, see you as a house guest. We both see you as a full family member with equal claim to this house. Should I pass away, even without your name on the contract, Charlie would consider the house co-owned by you two. Ask her, and she will confirm. None of us would hesitate to put your name on the contract to make the claim legally binding. Second of all, you’re in my will. You would not be left penniless with nowhere to go. I do have a murder clause, that anyone in my will who get convicted of murdering me, or conspiring to murder me, will not inherit anything. A slight precaution that’s also a leftover consequence from dating Lilith.”

“I thought you said she conspired to marry and divorce you to get to your money?”
“Ah, yes. But I’d written her into my will already when I found that out. Luckily, I hadn’t told her that or her plans might have changed. I wouldn’t have told you either, if I didn’t know the reason you have such big concerns about what would happen if I die.”

“Luce, we’ve only been dating for a couple of months. Why have you added me to your will already?”

Luci smirks. “Is there a mandatory timeframe to follow?” he jokes, before turning back to being serious. “Baby, I love you. We’re a team now. Why shouldn’t I add you in? If you leave me, I can always remove you again, or diminish the percentage of your cut.”

“I don’t want your money.”

Luci looks down on their joint hands. Sam can’t explain how Luci does it with barely a change in posture, but his aura draws inward, shields slamming up - he becomes distant. “Aaand we’re back on blood orange again,” Luci jokes without much humour. “Can we do the dishes and go sit in the couch? I had a lot of time to think while I was away, and money is a huge and sensitive obstacle for us. I’d like to be cuddled up with you when we talk about it.”

“Um. Yeah. Sure. Of course,” Sam answers. Luci leans in for a kiss, then gets to his feet.

They clear the table, box the leftovers, do the dishes together, all while finishing their beers. Then they grab another beer and move to the living room. Luci sits down, back leaned against the armrest of the couch, one leg pulled up along the backrest. Sam sees the invite for what it is and sits down between Luci’s legs, scooting to lean his back against Luci’s chest. He keeps thinking of what Charlie and Cas said about touch. It’s logical that a more sensitive subject requires more touch like this.

Luci puts an arm around Sam. The other one holds the bottle. “I get that I am everything a social justice warrior like yourself, hate. I’m a white male that was born rich. As if that isn’t enough, I’m intelligent, driven, arrogant, with talent to back up my attitude. I’ve had access to good education, travelled outside the US two to four times a year, growing up. And despite having a pretty egalitarian view on human rights, I have chosen the faustian route, prioritising academic wealth and gratification for the ego. I am the boogie man in today’s America. Whatever challenge I take on, I win. So, I win.”

“It’s not like you haven’t know suffering,” Sam defends.

“True. But to a lot of people out there, my suffering doesn’t count, since I’m born rich and white. They could, if they chose to do so, crawl out of their miserable existence. But they don’t. Because it’s hard. Because it’d require making sacrifices. They’re too focused on complaining about what they don’t have, to see what they can do with what they do have. And I’ve got no sympathy for them. But I don’t want to get off topic now. Bottom line is, Sam, your boyfriend is a millionaire.” Luci nuzzles Sam’s hair, then takes a sip of his beer.

“It’s not like you haven’t know suffering,” Sam defends.

“True. But to a lot of people out there, my suffering doesn’t count, since I’m born rich and white. They could, if they chose to do so, crawl out of their miserable existence. But they don’t. Because it’s hard. Because it’d require making sacrifices. They’re too focused on complaining about what they don’t have, to see what they can do with what they do have. And I’ve got no sympathy for them. But I don’t want to get off topic now. Bottom line is, Sam, your boyfriend is a millionaire.”

“I know that.”

“Do you now? Mh. I used to think it was a good thing that you weren’t after my money. Until I realised that any gift I try to give you is met with the same repulsion as if I offered to give you the clap.”

Sam opens his mouth to answer, but Luci puts a hand over it to stop him.

“No. Let me speak,” Luci admonishes. “Because this is something that’s hurtful. You might not realise that, but your attitude towards my wealth, is hurting me. A lot. Not only that. It’s
preventing me from living my life like I want to because you’re constantly making me choose between my money and you. And you also shame your brother, when he chooses to accept materialistic tokens of my affection.”

“I don’t like him using you.”

“But he isn’t, darling. Just like you, he doesn’t ask for anything, unless it will benefit several people, or is for a good cause. Like the trip he’s on now. A big difference though, is that he doesn’t decline my gifts, but sees them for what they are - shows of affection and gratitude. I believe I have Cas to thank for that. And we need to talk about this. Because I think, you’re focusing too much on the materialistic value of things, and fail to see the emotional value, and by doing so, you’re invalidating a big part of my identity.”

Sam takes a swig of his beer, trying to process what Luci is trying to say. He lifts his other hand to hold the one Luci’s got draped around his shoulder and chest. He has an uncomfortable lump in his belly, as always when the topic of money is brought up. Lucifer is using a very calm and soothing voice. But Sam can feel that Luci’s being very controlled, choosing his words carefully.

“Tell me, Sam, so I can understand it, why you won’t let me take you on trips to Europe, or offer you other luxuries that I can afford, but you can’t.”

Sam swallows, grasping for the right words. “I… I need to feel like we’re equals. I don’t want to feel like I’m inferior to you.”

“In that case, darling, you either need to switch jobs real fucking fast, or you need to stop measuring equality in money. Because we are equals already. And you’re buying into the the bullshit that being rich is a crime against the poor. Whether it’s your intention or not, you’re punishing me for being rich. And having a lot of money, is a symptom of my personality. It’s part of who I am. Charlie and I went abroad once. On our first day, a clever pickpocketer rid us of our money, IDs, airplane tickets home, and credit cards. Due to various factors, we couldn’t get this fixed for two weeks. And yet, we only had to sleep rough for one night. And by the time we got our new passports and credit cards, we had more than 2000 euros in cash between us. That’s because of who I am. Not my name or reputation, but my personality. Call it gogetter, A type, self-entitled asshole, dynamo, spark plug, hustler, opportunist, or any word you like. But I don’t wait for people to help me, I help myself. I will, in any circumstance you drop me in, accumulate wealth and, or, power. Money, to me, is just a tool to accomplish the level of comfort I require. I gladly share it with those I love. And will share it with strangers too, if I deem them worthy, or in acute desperate need.”

Luci pauses to kiss Sam’s hair and rub his cheek against it before he goes on. “I think human nature is shit. People are petty minded and greedy. Most people don’t lift a finger to get themselves out of a given situation. They don’t think that they can, and that it’s someone else’s responsibility to rectify their misfortune. I agree that life isn’t fair. And I agree that there are circumstances that you can’t help, that prevents you from crawling out of your misery and will drag you down until you can’t get up no matter what you choose to do. Except, of course, if you choose criminality. Take common ailments like asthma or allergies. Both can kill you, and will severely disable you, if untreated. One trip to the hospital, and a family can find themselves indebted for more than a year’s full income, since no insurance company will insure somebody with a pre-existing condition for a reasonable price. Not only that, family members will have to stay at home from work, losing income, to watch their relative trying not to suffocate, and be ready to call an ambulance they can’t afford, to get treatment they can’t afford. Now that’s not fair. Especially when taking medicine regularly renders these autoimmune diseases nothing more than minor annoyances that barely affects how we choose to live. That’s why Venus Rising focus so much on providing health care. As well as education, that’s another tool to get out of indigence.
But for the rest, people are responsible for their own lives. We’ve got free will. Few are willing to make the sacrifices I’ve made to achieve my goals. I’ve forsaken my family, and repeatedly chosen paths that will get me disliked or downright loathed.”

Once again Luci pauses, this time to drink. Sam remains quiet. It feels like Luci isn’t done talking. He’s right. Luci takes a deep breath through his nose, then lets it out slowly before he starts talking again. “Materialistically, we aren’t equal. But, Sam, the value you bring to my life, far outweighs all the money I have. The love, support, and joy you bring to my life, it can’t be bought. When we’re apart, I’m in a constant state of anticipation about getting to see you again. And when we’re together, you ease my mind and fill me with contentment.”

“Yeah, but you give me those things too. Your support has been unwavering, and I doubt I would be where I am today, mentally, if it wasn’t for you. I can never repay you for—”

“You treat this as if it’s an exchange of services. It isn’t. But if you insist on seeing it that way… think of it as us dealing in different currencies. Just like Colombian money and American money aren’t equal in value, neither is our affection. You’ve had Dean, then Jo, Cas, Gabe, and who knows how many others, investing emotional support and love in you. They’ve always been there for you. When Charlie left on her peregrination, I had nobody.” Luci grunts. “If you don’t count random wildlife, that is. I hate to admit how lonely I’ve felt. I try to fool myself that I enjoy such troglodytic existence. I don’t. Occasionally I’ve dated people, using my money to get them to mimic the affection I’ve sought. It’s not the same. Then Lucy started to show up, and her visits were my highlights when I wasn’t working. But don’t tell her that, or she’ll become even more of a brat than she already is,” Luci jokes.

Sam huffs in amusement at the same time as his heart clenches at the thought that his wayward cat being anybody’s sole provider of emotional comfort. Least of all Luci, who deserves so much love.

“Bottom line is, you’re feeding me when I was starving before, while you only had to tackle occasional bouts of hunger because you neglected to eat what you were served. You see what I mean?”

“Yeah…”

“I love to travel, Sam. But I’m not quite as fond of going alone. Making new discoveries with someone else, sharing the experience… I want to do that with you. It’s not just about flaunting my assets and spoiling you. It’s about doing things I really want to do.”

“I hadn’t thought of it that way…”

“I gather that. Speaking of emotional value. I’m going to make a confession. That day, when you took me out on a date for the first time? To the picnic on the dock?”

“Yeah?”

“It was the first time anybody had taken me out on a date. I was so nervous I had to ask Wayne how I was supposed to act. How you’re supposed to behave when you’re the datee.”

Sam lets out a surprised laugh then twists around to stare at Luci in surprise to see if he’s joking. “You’re serious?”

“Cross my heart.”

“Wow. Okay, um. That’s, that’s…”
“Ridiculous. I know. But I’ve never been courted. So every time you take me out, or do these little things that’s typical courting behaviour, it thrills me like you wouldn’t believe.” Luci smiles warmly and leans forward for a beer tasting kiss.

It’s all a very new angle for Sam to think from, but he gets it now. He understands where Luci’s coming from, and why their fight happened. “I’ll try to be more relaxed about you paying in the future. But I also feel guilty towards all the people who are poor, when I can wallow in luxury and comfort,” he admits. Guilt. His ever present companion. He lies down on his side, head rested on Luci’s pec. Luci’s hand come up to stroke his hair.

“When you were living rough with Dean, how did you feel when good things happened to people around the world? In the news, on TV, or around you?”

“I was happy for them,” Sam answers naturally.

“Even celebrities?”

“Oh course.”

“There you have it, darling. Some people resent when good things happen to others. They want everyone to be as miserable as they. They want you to feel guilty. Others, even if they’ve got nothing, will take heart, and be inspired by it. And really, yours and Dean’s story, is inspirational. So should you really feel guilty for the sake of haters, or enjoy life, for those who believe in love and happiness for all?”

Sam finds himself smiling with a warm buzz in his chest. “Seriously, Luce. Sometimes I’m not sure if you’re my boyfriend or therapist.”

Luci chuckles. “Both. Both is good.”

“Did you just quote Eldorado?”

“I might have?”

Sam sniggers. “Nerd.”

Luci shrugs with a little smirk. “About moving in together. Would you be more comfortable if we moved to a new place? Bigger, so you could have your own room, and get a say in the overall decor and all that?”

“Much more comfortable. But me and Charlie had a talk, when we resolved our issues? And she said that she’s always seen you two growing old together, living together. And I’m okay with that. But we’d have to discuss this with her, because she’d be moving with us. Plus, Dean and Cas are looking for a house in this area. So maybe they should be part of that discussion too? So they don’t move here to be close to us, just to find us moving somewhere else?”

Luci makes a sturgeon face and nods his agreement. “Democratic rule on the issue. Got it. Sounds like a good suggestion.” Luci empties his bottle and puts it on the table. For a while they just lie holding each other, mulling over the talk they just had. Mikey jumps up in the couch by Sam’s feet. He fusses a bit, then curls up to use Sam’s foot as a pillow. There’s a crash from the bedroom, declaring that Lucy is awake and that she just pushed the plastic bowl they both use to put spare change in, to the floor. Neither Lucifer nor Sam stirs. Then Luci says “Colour?”

“Green. You?”

“Green.”
**Step By Step**

Chapter Summary

Bit by bit, Luci and Sam fit their pieces together, healing, making it work.

Chapter Notes

Woohoo! Another long-awaited update. I got some beautiful love for this story recently that I felt compelled to update it. ;) I think the next chapter will be the last one. Possibly with a short epilogue.

This chapter was largely inspired by a Tumblr post. :) If you've seen the post you'll know which one. ;)

There might be a real magazine called Woke Magazine, but I didn't think to research it beforehand. I just thought about a name for a random edgy SJW magazine might be called. If this magazine does indeed exist, it has no relation to the magazine in this AU.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

**Step By Step**

Peace Declared

Sam’s cheeks are stretched so wide they hurt. He can’t stop grinning. He’s talking to Dean for the first time since Dean left for Argentina. It’s obvious why Luci thought Sam would have kept his mouth shut about the fight. Dean’s just SO UPBEAT. He’s talking more than Charlie does. Sam barely gets a word in sideways.

“It’s him, Sammy! I’m telling you, it’s him, it’s him, it’s him! Better up, he’s been searching for Wayne too. All his fucking adult life! But the only thing Cain remembers about his dad is that his name is Wayne. Heh. Makes it kinda hard to track someone down, huh? His mother moved them all around the fucking world during his childhood. So he remembers the name Wayne, and that it probably must have been a first world country since he remembers them having electricity and a nice bathtub. Sam, you’ve got to meet this guy. He’s awesome. Chill as fuck. And he’s travelled fucking everywhere. Plus, he can definitely geek out with Cas and Luci about bees. Cas is gonna be so jealous of me. I got to harvest a hive all by myself. Oh, oh! Don’t tell Wayne about Cain. I want it to be a surprise. When I come back we’re going to arrange for Cain to come over. You won’t tell Wayne, right? Promise.”

“I promise I won’t tell Wayne,” Sam dutifully agrees.

“Good. Oh! Guess what?”
“What?”

“My guide, Cesar. He runs a horse farm with his husband Jesse. I got to visit and they took me out riding. I’ve ridden, a horse. Eh? Eh? Imagine that. Me, on a horse. Like a real cowboy. John Wayne’s got nothing on me!”

Sam sniggers. “What did they do? Put you on a Shetland Pony and lead you around in an enclosed paddock?” Sam teases skeptically.

“No! Screw you. It was a normal horse. A huge ass horse. Full size. Hell, their heads are as long as a fucking arm. They gave me a coupla lessons in a paddock, sure. But then we went trail ridin’ and I’m telling you, man. That shit was awesome. You can’t just sit on a horse and steer it like a car. Ya gotta cooperate with it. Those fuckers are dangerous. And the one I rode got spooked at one point and reared. I stuck to it like I was glued to the saddle. Then it took off at like, 100 miles per hour. But I managed to get him under control and calmed him down. I was fucking Captain America on that horse.”

“Nerd.”

“What? You like Cap.”

“I said Chris Evans is hot. It’s not the same. Besides, I’ve always found Tony Stark more fascinating.”

Dean gasps in utter betrayal. “You’re team Ironman? But what about Bucky?”

Sam rolls his eyes. “Dean. I’m not having this discussion with you. This is Charlie’s department. And for the record, T’Challa’s my fave.” Dean mutters something incoherent, so Sam feels compelled to add “And I’ve always had a thing for Poison Ivy.”

“Dude, that’s DC comics, not Marvel. Maaan, you suck.”

Sam sniggers. He knew that already. But sometimes it’s fun to tease his brother by mess ing up facts or favouring the wrong characters.

“But screw it. I still wish you’d been here. And I’m tellin ya, if I ever get a daughter, I’ma buy her a horse and teach her to ride it.”

Sam laughs. “Seriously, Dean? That’s sexist. Boys can like horses too. You obviously do. So why not buy one for yourself if you like riding so much? Judging by your bowlegs, you were born to do it.”

Dean sniggers a Beavis and Butthead kind of snigger. “That’s not the kinda ridin’ these legs are made for, if you catch my drift?” he says.

Sam can practically hear how Dean waggles his eyebrows suggestively. “Oh my God, Dee. That’s too much information.”

“Yes, yeah. You overgrown prude,” Dean says affectionately. “Taking care of horses is hard work. Gonna give it to my kid to teach em responsibility, or something like that. Nah, but seriously. Where would I keep it? I’d have to move into Bobby’s clinic or something to keep it close. They’ve got pastures out back.”

“Oh, that reminds me. Luci and I have decided to move in together.”

“T’s about time. Finally taking the plunge properly, ey?” Dean praises.
“Yeah, but we’re going to actually move. Charlie will most likely move with us too. And since you’re looking for a house in the area we figured we’d have a family counsel when you get back.”

“Better include Gabe in that counsel. Cas is real particular about wanting him fairly close.”

“Will do.”

“Great. Looking forward to a little brainstorming. Oh, and you know what else happened? We were…”

Being able to talk to Dean again is great. Sam doesn’t tell Dean about the fight. There’s no need. Not right now, at least. Right now he’ll just enjoy Dean’s retelling of his adventures.

Implementing the traffic light system in their daily life has both downsides and upsides. The downside is that during sex Luci will say “Colour?” at any given random moment, and if Sam doesn’t respond right away he will just _stop_, driving Sam insane. It’s effective, though. Even if Sam turns foul-mouthed enough to be mistaken for Dean. Who knew you could fit so many frustrated “fuck/fucking” into a sentence that’s only supposed to contain the word “Green”? Luci will also randomly say “yellow” or “red”, to get Sam used to react to them, not because he feels that way. One could argue that you shouldn’t cry wolf. But when Sam fails to react to them fast enough, Luci will stop what he’s doing or shove Sam off. It’s effective too.

The upside of that is that they discovered that Sam, despite the frustration, _enjoys_ orgasm denial and edging. When he’s near coming and is thwarted, he turns more desperate, more sensitive, and more eager to please Luci to get his reward. In contrast, if Luci’s denied coming, he turns into a pissy little resentful bitch for hours afterwards. He could lose his arousal altogether.

Outside of the bedroom, the training to get Sam to have a backbone response to colours morphs into something else entirely. It’s because it’s easier for Sam to put a colour gradient on a feeling than using the actual emotional adjectives. It puts an extra mental barrier between the feeling and himself, and thus makes it easier to talk about. So rather than being a safeword system, outside of bed, it turns into a tool to describe the level of the emotion in question. It’s because of the talk they had, when Sam had used orange and blood orange, but it turns out, colour coding life, is a tremendously effective tool for Sam to deal with his depression. At this time he’s tethering at the edge of reaching the point of being well. If he didn’t go to group therapy, he’d think he was well already. He still has problems. More than those around him understand because he doesn’t show it. It’s still the in-between moments, when he doesn’t have a purpose. And he’s a lot more sensitive to letdowns. They get to him and threaten to bring him down a lot deeper than they should have.

How useful of a tool thinking in colour is, is proved when Sam has a particularly bad day. Luci had taken to randomly text “Colour?” to him. He’d respond on a scale from green to red. But this particular day something’s happened.

With shaky fingers, Sam almost writes “black”. He stops himself from pushing send, and instead writes “night sky”.

**Lucifer:** I'm in a meeting. Will call as soon as I can. In the meantime, show me the exact hue. Send me a picture.

Sam lets out a shaky breath. Normally, he'd be better at not taking today's turn of events personally. But he's very emotionally sensitive for things like this, while in his state of healing. He Googles ‘night sky’ and sets out to find an all black picture with a couple of white dots. Ten
minutes of watching pictures of the myriads of colours a night sky can take on, he’s calmer, and needs a lighter colour than black. He settles on a picture taken from under trees. The trees are like huge black, looming claws, trying to prevent the watcher from reaching a purplish blue sky with its millions of stars. When he’s sent it he waits, fighting a myriad of emotions inside. He gets up from his chair and closes the door so his colleagues won’t see him, then tries to focus on a case file. It just feels useless. Luckily, Luci calls only minutes later.

“Sorry I couldn’t call straight away, darling. What happened?”

“Um. It’s funny. Just the other day, you were talking about private health insurance.” It’s not funny at all. “And I’ve been handling a case where an insurance company has rejected a claim wrongly.”

“Okay?”

“You know I started working here because we get to spend as much time as needed on each case, even if they don’t bring in any money to the firm. That’s unusual, right? I mean, pro bono cases are usually given only, like, three to five minutes tops, and left to the least experienced lawyers, right?”

“Uh-huh?” Luci knows this of course. He’s a lawyer too. Sam’s just talking to get his thoughts in line.

“But I still need to prioritise. It’s not fair. I know that. We could have handled a lot more cases if we didn’t spend as much time on each case. But then our fail-rate would be as bad as everyone else’s and we’d essentially be working for the opposition.”

“Quite right,” Luci agrees.

“But I still have to prioritise,” Sam repeats. “And I had this other case, a custody battle where one parent is abusive. A five-year-old boy is stuck in the middle and all I could think of is that I had to get him away from the abusive parent as soon as possible. But then—“ Sam’s voice breaks. He takes a deep breath. “The client with the insurance claim… he’s dead. It’s my fault. If I’d put his case before the custody case, it might be resolved by now. He might have gotten his insurance money and gotten the treatment he needed. I practically killed him. I met him. A nice, soft-spoken, middle-aged man, and I shook his hand and promised I’d help him, and now—” Sam’s voice breaks again. “I’ve been abused growing up. I’m fine. That five-year old I just made sure to separate from the abusive parent, he could have taken a few more beatings, another month or two, and my sick client would have lived. I—”

“Sam. Listen to me. He might not have. You are brilliant and wonderful, but you’re not fine. Neither is Dean. You’re both still struggling to cope with the damage that was done to you as children. And there’s nothing that says another month would have meant the boy in question wouldn’t have been beaten to death. Second of all, it’s not your fault. You aren’t responsible for your client’s death. The insurance company that denied his claim is. You know as well as I do, that they systematically deny valid claims. Just like I’m not responsible for my client’s crimes, you’re not responsible for the wrongs done to your clients.”

“I don’t know how Dean and Cas deal with this. With losing people they’re trying to help. I want to help people. I want to make their lives better. My job isn’t supposed to be life or death, Luci. I’m supposed to do the things that come after their job is done. When people are left homeless, staring at their burnt out home, or are released from the hospital. I’m not cut out for—” This time he can’t stop the sob or the stinging tears. He just feels the loss so acutely in his heart. His failure to comprehend how urgent the need to win the case was, drowns his mind in a dark shroud of despair and guilt.
Luci’s trying to comfort him while he cries, and he manages to get himself under control.

“Baby, this is what I want you to do. Put on the headset, then go to Tom or Grace and explain what happened. Ask for the afternoon off. If you have other urgent cases, and the rest of your firm is busy, I’ll handle them. Then we’ll either contact Cas, or if you prefer, I’ll find a good psychologist that specialises in dealing with these things, that works with people in life-saving occupations. And I’ll get you an emergency appointment. I’m not equipped to help you. But you need to talk to someone.”

Luci stays on the line, a silent ghost in Sam’s headset while Sam talks to Grace. As soon as Sam tells her about the situation, she offers to take his cases and to call a psychologist, the same way Luci had. Sam asks if he can use his own doctor, getting a yes. She tells him that the firm will pay the costs for a session, since the issue is work-related. Sam thinks for the umpteenth time, that he wishes every workplace took such good care of its employees as Rainsborough Law does.

Cas is off work and comes to pick Sam up. They meet up with another colleague of Cas’, and go for a beer to talk. Despite their situations not being the same, talking to two surgeons about losing someone on the job, helps. When Sam gets home, he lets himself be mollycoddled by Luci. Then they lie in bed talking about feelings around their own profession and the consequences of their actions at work. Sam doesn’t feel good about what happened, but they’d caught him and prevented him from falling back down. He’s fit to work again in the morning.

The thing about looking for a picture of the colour is a big help when he feels anxiety crawling. Five minutes of focusing on that, and he can send a green picture instead of yellow. To him, it turns into something meditative, kind of like running, except he can do it at work. He starts sending pictures of colours unprompted.

Another use of colour coding between them is born spontaneously. Every close relationship tends to develop private little communications, and this whole colour thing—at least at this stage of their lives—turns into theirs. It all begins when Charlie comes home all keyed up while they’re in the kitchen, having a snack. Sam’s by the table eating a sandwich and Luci’s by the counter, making one for himself too.

“Dudes! My men! Fellas!” Charlie says when she enters the kitchen. “You’re free tonight so I’ve got a great idea of what we can do!” She turns towards Sam and Sam sees Luci go stiff behind her. “There’s this new modern art exhibition down at Foster’s, and—”

Luci starts humming “Red, red, wiine. Goes to my heeeaad. Makes me forget…”

“—I think we should go, all three of us. It’ll be awesome!”

Maybe it’s because Luci will turn into a pissbaby every time Sam listen to UB40 in the car, or maybe it’s just that they’ve been practising the traffic light system so much, but Sam’s instant thought is that Luci really doesn’t want to go, because of the colour in the song.

“I’m sorry, Charlie. I had a shitty day and really don’t want to be around strangers. I was planning to just hog my boyfriend and force him to watch some French movie with me,” Sam lies.

“Aw, shucks. Alright. In that case, I’m gonna get changed and go,” she says and leaves the kitchen.

“I love French movies,” Luci states when Charlie’s left the room.

“You do?”
“Sure. Lots of titties and violence. But realistic, not like Tarantino movies.”

“Huh. I’ve only seen two, but Dean’s walked in on me both times, so he thinks I only watch artsy European movies because of it. I dunno. I found them slow and weird.”

“In that case, we’re going to watch a couple of classics, then amp you up to less mainstream ones. But we’ll start with Nikita, I think. The French version. You seen it?”

Sam shakes his head.

“Oh, oh! You know what we should do? We should do a Luc Besson marathon. Things he touches just turns into pure gold. From Le Grande Bleu to Taken. He’s a genius.”

“Taken isn’t a French movie.”

Luci scrunches up his face in a grimace and waves his hand dismissively. “Doesn’t matter. Besson is French. He wrote it and co-produced it. What do you prefer? Only watch French movies or do a Besson marathon?”

“Besson.”

“Good boy,” Luci coos, pleased.

Sam snorts in amusement, shakes his head and chuckles.

Charlie comes back into the kitchen, dolled up to high heavens, and spots the sandwich in Luci’s hand. “Oo. I need to eat something before I go. Can I…?” she says and plucks the sandwich out of Luci’s unresisting hand, biting a huge chunk out of it while Luci gives her a dry look. “How do I look?” she asks with her mouth full and spins around.

“Like a chipmunk,” Luci deadpans.

“I’m talking about the dress, you cretin,” Charlie counters, this time covering her mouth with her hand.

Luci sniggers and turns around to make a new sandwich for himself.

“You look beautiful, Charlie,” Sam opines.

“Thank you, Sam.”

“You’re wasting your time, C. I’m telling you, she’s straight,” Luci interjects.

“Hey! You don’t know that. You haven’t met her.”

Luci sniggers and turns around with his new sandwich. “A 100 bucks, says she is,” he challenges and takes a bite.

“You’re on.” They hear a car stop outside. “Hup. That’s my cab. Gotta go. Catch you later, bitches,” Charlie says and walks out, stuffing the rest of the sandwich in her mouth as she goes.

“You don’t like going to art galleries?” Sam asks once she’s left.

“Sure I do. The key word here is *modern* art. And modern art, isn’t. Last time she dragged me to a modern art exhibition, I was stuck looking at things like a curtain that someone had placed beside a fan so it moved a bit, 6 foot long stick figure drawings, a dot on an empty canvas, and a masonite board with colours on, that looked like what *real* artists use to blend their colours on.
Everything was just a greyish brown smudge. The so-called artists are horrifically over-paid, no talented losers, taking up gallery space from artists who are actually good at what they do.”

Sam chuckles. “Alright. I haven’t been to a modern art exhibit. But I enjoy going to art galleries.”

“Then we should go, but not to Foster’s. Thanks for saving my ass, by the way. Had I been the one to decline, Charlie would have bullied me into it.”

“No problem. I’ve had a great day. It would be dumb to ruin it by doing something you don’t want to do.”

Charlie comes home a couple of hours later, looking mighty put upon. She slaps five twenties on the living room table in front of Luci. Luci cackles. “I tooold you so,” he sing-songs.

“Oh, be quiet. Straight people. The menace of society. Everybody should just be bisexuels and be done with it,” Charlie grumbles.

“But you’re a lesbian,” Sam points out. He’s curled up under Luci’s arm on the couch.

“Everybody but me, obviously,” Charlie clarifies and gives Sam a wink.

Sam chuckles. “You want to watch movies with us instead?” Sam offers and lifts the blanket over his legs.

Charlie perks up. “Sounds perfect,” she answers and drops down in the bend of Sam’s legs. She curls up against Sam’s side and lets him pull the blanket over them as well as put his arm around her. Both she and Luci practically ooze contentment. It’s contagious. After that, they end up employing the humming of a colour song as a tactic to communicate in secret, while others are around.

Dean of course, of course, manages to put words on what Sam has such a huge problem expressing.

Sam lies in the bedroom reading, and Luci is in the living room, working while talking on speaker phone with someone. When Sam gets up to get a soda, he hears Dean’s voice coming from the speaker.

“Nah, man. It ain’t fucking easy. When you come from a background like ours, having nothing becomes a part of your identity, and you’re fucking proud. You’re proud of making it without help from anyone. You’re proud of clawing your way up. It’s an accomplishment. We’ve been hungry, cold, and dirty. Sometimes we lived with others too and shared our bounty. It was important to pull your weight. Nobody had nothing so you thought communally and shared what you could. But there were always moochers, you know? Those who could pull their weight, but didn’t. I fucking hated those sons of bitches. And the fear of being like them, or be perceived as one of them, is a fucking killer. Thing is, Luci boy, that the idea that you have to earn your keep to deserve a share, it stays with ya. It doesn’t matter that I make good money now. I still see myself like the homeless thug that lived in a car and hustled to make sure my little bro could go to college and rise above our level. And Sam worked too, you know? I didn’t want him to. But he did. Delivering newspapers and shit like that.”

Sam doesn’t hear Luci’s answer as he turns into the kitchen. He takes his time choosing something to drink, warring between wanting to listen in and wanting to respect privacy. He picks a Mountain Dew and goes into the living room, looking at Luci in question.
Luci gives him a warm smile and cuts Dean off. “Say hello to your little brother, Dean. You’re on speaker.”

“Heya, Sammy.”

“Hi, Dean.” Having been included, Sam sits down in his recliner (Luci may have bought it, but it’s his, just as its twin is Dean’s) and opens his soda. Now that he knows he isn’t intruding, he can relax.

“Go on, Dean. What were you saying?” Luci urges, tapping away at his computer. His ability to multi-task is insane. When Sam tries to write something and have a conversation at the same time, he just winds up writing in random words from the conversation where it intrudes on his thoughts. What he is good at, is tuning people out while he focuses.

“Right, right. I said that they always wanted something from ya. Sometimes it’s straightforward. Like when you buy a drink for someone, hoping to score. Both of you know sex is the desired outcome of the action, whether they oblige or not. But when you’re down on your luck, strangers who help you often as not are out to either have power over you, or want to feel superior. Most people think that if they do you a favour, even if you don’t ask for it, you owe them. Or they’ll rub it in your face, reminding you of how they helped you, to make you grovel and be grateful. And fuck, but pride is all I had. It’s all I owned in the world. So then bending my neck, hat in hand, was giving away the only thing I had. Total humiliation. And if they didn’t require that, you always wondered what they were after. That’s why it’s so important to be on equal standing.”

“Yes but you’re talking about strangers. We’re talking close relationships here,” Luci points out while reading some document lying on the desk beside his computer. Sam might have missed part of the conversation, but he has no trouble keeping up.

“Yeah, but it’s the same. More often than not, people keep a tally. They may not make a fuss about it until the day you break up or have an argument, then, BAM, throw it in your face. ‘I paid for this or that’, or ‘I gave you that, give it back’ about gifts they’ve given. I’d rather keep my pride, so I’d throw the money back in their faces if it was so God damned important, or throw their gifts at their feet. Fuck if I want them, if they’re gonna use it to make me inferior.”

Luci looks up and frowns, staring out at nothing, fully focused on Dean’s voice from the speakers. “That’s not how gifts work. You give something to someone, you forsake your right to it forever, even if you regret it, unless otherwise stated before handing it over. Like family heirlooms or such like. But then it isn’t really a gift, but a loan, rather.”

Dean sniggers. “You lawboys, always making mental contracts,” he teases, then turns serious again. “But, yeah. I agree. I think most people would, until they’re in a conflict, feeling hurt or betrayed or whatever.”

Luci hums thoughtfully. “Well, you can rest assured, Dean, no gifts of mine come with strings attached. If I want something in return, I make it clear in advance. I have never, ever, tried to reclaim anything I’ve given to anyone. Not even to Lilith. That she and Alistair are still serving time because I got vindictive, is another matter.”

Dean sniggers. “Fair enough. But then there’s the thing about masculinity that plays its part too, ya know? It’s so ingrained that we’re supposed to bring home the bread and provide for our partners. That bit gets all messed up since Sammy an’ me are both dating other men, but it’s hammered into our backbone. Just like, the pride thing is part of the fucking lizard brain by now. Heh. It’s kinda funny how we both ended up with guys who are so much more well off than us. And I’m tellin’ ya, that, that wasn’t easy for me. When Cas and I met, I was making 54k a year, and he made over 500k. I was not comfortable with that. I make about 90k now, with my new job, which is nice.
But in the end, it came down to trust, rather than the actual amount we earn. Cas is, he’s a part of me. I’d give my life for that nerd. Granted, he had to fucking house-train me to relax about money. And sometimes I can still feel uncomfortable if he buys me something expensive out of the blue. But I try to not let it get to me, and just be happy about it.”

“It also feels like you’re using people you love,” Sam chimes in. “Even when you know they can afford it, or don’t mind.”

“Yeah. And the idea that they might doubt whether you’re in it for them, or their money, fucking sucks.”

Luci hums again. “As you know, I’ve never truly had to give any thought about money. But I do understand the pride and the drive to hold onto one’s own autonomy. I just want you to understand that even if I’d end up spending a ridiculous amount of money on you, you can always tell me to fuck off. My generosity towards you, is not motivated by a wish to coerce or exploit you. Charlie and I’ve been living by ‘what’s mine, is yours’ for a long time. I consider you as much a part of my family as she is. And family is about sharing.”

“I know that, Luci boy,” Dean answers. “But a trip like the one you suggested, and it would be awesome, I’ll give you that, I’d much rather do it with all of Y’all, you know? Go on something simpler for our honeymoon, then perhaps take a trip like that with everyone together? Because I gotta tell you, like this trip, it’s been insane. But I keep thinking ‘man, I wish Sammy was here’, or ‘Cas woulda loved this’, or ‘Gabe would go berserk over these treats’. Plus, if we go together, it’d lessen the feeling of being a mooch.”

Luci leans back in his chair with the biggest grin, lacing his finger together over his stomach. “I would love to do that.”

Sam had been sipping his soda, but now leans forward sharply. “Wait. This discussion is about your honeymoon?”

“Yeah. Luci boy offered to pay for it as a wedding gift, and made a ridiculously luxurious suggestion for where to go. What did you think we were talking about?” Dean asks.

“N-nothing. Go on.”

“No, no, no. That’s your lying voice, Sammy.”

Luci sniggers. “Sammy and I recently had a discussion about finances. I bet he thought I was talking about it with you,” he explains and winks at Sam. It’s not a lie per se, and it curbs Dean’s knee-jerk reaction to bully the full truth about their fight out of Sam.

“Oh. Alright. What do you say, Sammy? Wanna go on a vacay with us?”

“Um. Yeah. Sure. Sounds like fun.” It does, actually. Even if Luci will pay for all of it.

Luci rubs his hands together excitedly. “Great. It will have to wait until after the MacLeod case is over. Once that gets started, I will not have time for indulgences.”

“Far out!” Dean chimes in equally excited.

“About the honeymoon?” Luci prompts.

“Cas and I will be happy to accept it as a gift, just not to where you suggested. I want to go there with all of Y’all.”
The topic moves onto something else, but Sam’s stuck focusing on the things Dean had said. There are so many variables to why it’s uncomfortable letting Luci pay for things, and Dean nailed several. But the things Luci had said earlier also buzz in Sam’s head. About commitment, and the feeling of rejection he had when he wanted to share with Sam and Sam said no. Luci hasn’t said a word about money since their talk. He doesn’t push the issue, but Sam’s certain the feelings don’t go away just because they’ve talked about it. He is a millionaire. And he does give a lot to charity. More importantly, he’s helping, hands on. He doesn’t just donate and consider his conscience cleared. He goes to places and volunteers hard work and long hours. Sam respects and admires that. He likes that Luci doesn’t wallow in luxury and lives in a big mansion. It shouldn’t be as hard as it is to accept things from Luci. But it is.

The problem is that once Sam’s paid all his bills, he’s got very little left to spend. He’d love to take Luci on more dates for instance. But as it stands, he’s very limited. He can’t ask him to do certain things because then he’d practically have to ask Luci to take him out. Any money in Sam’s account, he can do what he wants with. But money that comes from Luci feels like something he’d have to ask how he’s allowed to spend. He ruminates on things, while Dean and Luci talk. He comes up with an answer that is part an illusion, but it might be what he needs, just to feel good about his economy.

Once Luci hangs up, Sam speaks.

“Hey, Luce. I’ve been thinking…”

“Mhm?” Luci answers, tapping away on his computer.

“Um… Could you…? I was wondering…” It’s hard to even get the words out. Luci stops what he’s doing at Sam’s floundering. Sam takes a deep breath. “Look. You’re right. Not having much left after the bills does add a lot of stress for me. I was wondering if you perhaps could pay half of the mortgage each month until we move and I sell?” It would leave him with more money left each month and not having to ask Luci for anything if he wants to do something. Granted, he’d still be getting the money for Luci, but it’d go straight to the bank and he won’t have to feel so cringy about it.

Luci blinks at him for a beat, then his face split in the biggest smile. “Of course, darling. I would like nothing better.”

It’s a start. They both need to work on deeper levels of trust. But it’s a start.

Living alone isn’t half as nice as living with other people. But living with Charlie makes for some strange situations. There are a couple of hooks on the living room ceiling. Sam’s never wondered about their purpose.

Not until he steps inside the door after a long workday to find… a naked woman hanging from ropes attached to said hooks. Sam’s eyes bug. “Oh god! I’m sorry. I—” He turns on his heel and steps outside again, closing the door after himself, heart beating frantically, because what the hell?

No, seriously. Why is there a naked lady hanging from the ceiling in their home?

He takes his phone out from his pocket to call Luci, but the door opens before he can hit dial. Charlie comes out closing the door behind her, flustered and apologetic and Sam’s eyes bug for the second time. Charlie’s dressed in sky-high spiked heels and a skin-tight latex/leather ensemble that doesn’t leave much to the imagination. Or, more truthfully, feeds the imagination in a million indecent ways. Sam promptly averts his gaze, cheeks burning crimson. “Charlie, what the hell?”
“I know, I know. I’m sorry, Sam. Luci said you were gonna stay at your place tonight.”

“I was, but I changed my mind. What are—” Sam turns his head to look at her, only to cut himself off and avert his gaze again. “Jesus, Charlie. The neighbours can see you!”

Charlie sniggers. “I don’t mind. If they can’t take all this awesomeness, they can move. You wanna come in to talk about this?”

Sam bitchfaces Charlie, her getup forgotten. “There’s a naked lady hanging from the ceiling, Charlie. I’m pretty sure she won’t appreciate strange men ogling her and prancing around her while she’s in that state,” he says snippily.

“Oh, no. She’ll definitely appreciate that. As long as you don’t grope her and only pet her non-sexually.”

“Pet her?! I’m not gonna pet her, Charlie! She’s tied up and exposed. Me just being here feels like I’m forcing myself on her without her consent.”

Charlie holds up a finger. “Hold on. We’re going to solve this right now.” She opens the door just a crack and pokes her head inside. “Billie?”

“Yes, Mistress.”

“Sam is one of the guys I told you about. He lives here, but he won’t come inside unless you tell him it’s okay. Are you alright with him seeing you like that?”

“Yes, Mistress.”

“That doesn’t count. She’s tied up and, and, subbing. She won’t tell you no if that would displease you,” Sam protests.

Charlie pulls her head out of the door crack to scowl at him, but before she can say anything Billie speaks up from within the house. “That’s not true, Sir. If I’m not okay with something I will let my Mistress know and she’ll respect that. Sir.” Her voice bears a note of indignance.

“Sam, if you think you don’t have a right to voice a protest when you’re subbing then we need to have a talk about that,” Charlie tells him. “That’s the whole point of the traffic light system.”

“Right. Um. Didn’t think of that right now.” Sam leans closer to the door and raises his voice. “Billie, was it?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Are you sure you’re okay with me coming in?”

“Yes, Sir.”

Charlie chips in a question. “Would you like for Sam to admire how beautiful you are, all tied up?”

“Yes, Mistress.”

Charlie looks at him with an eyebrow raised in question. Sam swallows dryly, mortified and nervous, and gives her a nod, then follows her inside.

By the time Luci gets home Sam’s mostly acclimated to the weird situation, even if he still feels
somewhat lost and bewildered. He’s sitting in his recliner beside where Billie’s still hanging. The way she’s tied up is downright artful, and he totally gets why Billie would want to be admired like this. He’s helping by feeding her grapes and giving her water from a bottle with a straw, watching her and Charlie interact, when Luci comes into the house.

Luci doesn’t bat an eyelash at the sight. Instead, he ignores Sam and Charlie, and instead goes straight to Billie and gets down on a knee before her to come eye to eye with her. “Hi. My name is Lucifer Alighieri, and I live here. Are you comfortable with me being present while you scene?” he asks, only looking her in the eyes, not at her body. Billie’s lips quirk into a faint smile. “Yes, Sir.”

“Good. You can call me Luci if you don’t want to call me Sir.”

“Sir is fine.”

“Excellent. Current colour?”

“Green, Sir.”

“Very good. What’s your name?”

“Billie. Billie Reaper, Sir.”

“Billie. How would you like for me to address you?”

“Billie, or ‘pet’, Sir.”

Luci purrs a satisfied hum. Charlie stands back watching the interaction with a content expression and Sam keeps quiet, fascinated by Luci’s calm and assertive aura. He doesn’t even feel jealousy at the moment.

“Charlie has made some astounding ropework on you, pet. Will you allow me to inspect it, touching both you and your bindings while I do?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Very good, pet.” Luci purrs and reaches out to stroke Billie over her hair like he’s rewarding her, then he stands up and finally looks at the ropework displaying Billie’s body. “Damn, C. This is some gorgeous ropework.”

“Thanks.” Charlie directs herself towards Billie and proudly says “I told you my boys are all about consent.”

Luci walks around Billie, giving Sam a brief peck while he passes, and touches the intricate knots along Billie’s back. “Would you show me how you did this, C. This is downright amazing,” he gushes.

That seems to trigger Charlie into an excited teacher-mode while Sam keeps looking at Billie, unsure of how he feels about all this. Billie appears utterly content with having two strange men seeing her like this. If anything, she seems to appreciate Luci’s behaviour even if he touches her when he touches the rope around her body. Maybe it’s how confused Sam feels that stops him from being jealous, or maybe it’s how exposed and vulnerable Billie is. Or perhaps it’s because Luci isn’t turned on. Whatever it is, he feels protective of Billie and stops paying Luci and Charlie any heed. “Aren’t you uncomfortable like this?” he asks her.
“Not at all, Sir.”

“Ca-can I pet you? On the head, I mean?” She’d seemed to like it when Luci did it.

Billie gives him an amused, knowing look. “Yes, Sir.”

Hesitantly, Sam reaches out and starts petting her over the head, not knowing what to do with the strange feelings he’s having. It’s a comfort to stroke her hair continuously.

“Sam, colour?” Luci barks suddenly.

“Green,” Sam answers without thinking, head snapping up to look at Luci.

Luci gives him a warm smile and a wink. He’s not sure if he really is ‘green’, but he’s not ‘bright yellow’, and doesn’t want to leave the situation, so it’ll have to do. Billie’s relaxed, and after a while, she enters a content, almost drowsy state, though she answers promptly when spoken to.

The whole evening is unreal. When they take Billie down they all help to massage her limbs to get the blood flowing. Dinner is super awkward, though Sam’s the only one who seems to think that. Luci and Charlie talk like they always do. As if there wasn’t a naked woman kneeling on a pillow beside Charlie, being hand fed. Not even Lucy seems to take special note of it when she comes home to try to mooch off the dinner table.

Afterwards, they leave Charlie and Billie to their own devices to fetch Mikey from Wayne, take an evening walk, then withdraw to their bedroom. Naked and cuddled together, Luci speaks up. “How do you feel about what happened this evening, Samwise?”

Sam fumbles for words. “I don’t know. I’m still trying to digest it. It was. It was interesting. It’s not. It’s not something I think I’d be comfortable trying myself. I mean, just obeying like that. Just, no. But I’m kinda glad I got to experience it? And it was super weird to see Charlie that bossy and strict.”

Luci chuckles. “Mmh. I wouldn’t want to play those sort of games with you. I would, if you asked. But I prefer when you don’t ‘Yessir’ me. Did you get jealous when I touched her?”

Sam shakes his head. “No, strangely enough. I was mostly worried about how Billie was feeling. It must have been so humiliating.”

Luci places a kiss on Sam’s chest. “Billie is a CEO at a large company, responsible for hundreds of employees. It’s a way for her to unwind. Humiliated is not how she’ll feel when she leaves tomorrow.”

“I get that, but, um, it’s not for me. But… It was sort of good to see the traffic light system at work? I’m thinking… maybe we could, you know, play our kind of game soon? I think I’m ready for it. Or will be, soon.”

Luci lets out a filthy chuckle and rolls on top of him. “I like the sound of that. Soon.”

They don’t indulge in anything out of the norm when they make love that night, but the idea of finally making their text-sex fantasy a reality within a foreseeable future, has Sam buzzing with anticipation.

Sam knows that Luci is hated, of course. He knows Luci gets threats. But ‘knowing’ and seeing are two different things. He wasn’t really prepared for the reality of it. Once Luci started working on the Crowley case in earnest and the media got wind of him defending Crowley, Sam gets to
experience it for the first time. He sees it everywhere. From the debates on law-centric SJW accounts he follows on Twitter, to newspaper articles. And some people don’t limit themselves to write about Luci’s actual past actions. They paint him out as having done all kinds of horrible things. Some things are pure fiction, painted as truth. According to one article, Luci lives in a huge penthouse, with marble and gold plating, bought with all the money he earned on the Sucrocorp trial. Sam scoffs. “Would you look at this crap? This is a complete fabrication!” He says and throws the magazine in Luci’s lap. They’re lying side by side in bed. Luci’s reading the contracts Crowley’s made with every person he’s allegedly swindled. Every contract is thick as a small book and he takes a couple home each night to read them and make notes on post-its that he puts in the margin.

Now he lowers the contract and picks up the magazine Sam’s been reading. He chews on his pencil while skimming through the article, then hums interestingly. “Technically, we could live like this. Is that something you want?” he asks and scrunches up his face in skepticism while looking at Sam.

“No! Of course not. That’s not the point. These are vile lies, all of it,” Sam complains angrily and taps the article. “You’re nothing like they describe. They have you confused with Donald Trump.”

Luci chuckles. “Darling, this is a good thing,” he says and holds up the article. “The less the public view of me matches up with reality, the better. With things like this being taken seriously, the less the risk of anyone wanting to harm me, finding me. In fact, I should thank the author.” He puts the magazine back in Sam’s lap and reaches for his phone.

“Who are you calling? It’s two AM!”

Luci holds up his hand to silence Sam. Somebody picks up. “Bela. I need you to send a fruit basket to…” he picks up the magazine again to look at the article again. “A Mr. Jeffrey Logan at…” he turns the magazine over to look at its cover, makes a disgusted face and throws a miffed look at Sam. “Woke Magazine. Really, Samwise? You actually buy this crap?” he asks before turning his attention to Bela on the phone again. “I want it to contain quince and an assortment of fruits, a bar of soap, a handful of nuts and bolts, a deck of cards, and a pacifier. In addition to that, I want a printed thank you card with no name on it. I want it delivered to his home anonymously within ninety minutes…Uhuh?... I don’t know where he lives, that’s your job finding out….Yes, I know what time it is, now hop to it,” he orders and snaps his fingers by the speaker, then hangs up and sniggers to himself.

Sam stares at him in disbelief. “You’re sending him a fruit basket in the middle of the night.”

Luci gives him a shit-eating grin. “Why not?”

“What’s the nuts, bolts, soap, cards, and pacifier for?”

Luci shrugs. “I don’t know. But I’m willing to bet he’ll spend a good amount of time trying to figure it out.”

“And quince?”

“Useless fruit. Too hard and tart to be eaten raw.”

Sam chuckles and shakes his head. “You’re a troll.”

“The circus has just gotten started, baby.”
Chapter End Notes

Thank you for still reading and please! Do comment! :D

End Notes

Please comment? It's very appreciated. I aim to become a better writer of course and a line or two about what you liked, found funny, or upset you in a chapter goes a long way to both get better and be inspired to write more. :) 

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