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Tropes You Love

by [emwebb17](#)

Summary

I wrote (and am in the process of writing) short stories that employ fun (and sometimes tired, ha ha) tropes that most (but not all) people seem to enjoy in fanfiction. Each chapter is a trope and each trope has three different versions of it. The stories are either Destiel or Cockles and have a rating that ranges from General Audiences to Explicit. The warnings/tags for each story are listed at the beginning of each section/new story. Please take care to read them as not all these stories are fluffy!

Chapters that contain an (I) after them are incomplete, but will list the type of trope and a short description of the three stories that will accompany it (ratings are subject to change). I have no schedule for updating this, unfortunately, as I write these as a way to stimulate my "muse" when I get stuck on longer fics.

If you see a trope you like that isn't included here, let me know if you think it should be. Remember, these are tropes and not kinks--although some I have chosen kind of blur that line.

Soul Mates/Made For Each Other

Made for Each Other/Soul Mates

1. Name of Soul Mate Appears on Body - Cockles - Teen
2. Hearts Glow in Proximity of Soul Mate - Cockles - General Audiences
3. ABO: True Mates - Destiel - Explicit

1. Soul Mate's Name Appears on Body: Cockles – Teen

Warnings: recreational drug use

When Jensen was sixteen and the name appeared over his heart, he was relieved to see that it was a girl's name. Both his brother and uncle had male soul mates, and while they made each other happy after finding each other, platonic soul mates were always difficult—logistically speaking. It made finding a spouse difficult since that person had to either also have a platonic soul mate or, worse, have lost theirs at a young age.

His uncle had managed to make it work; his wife's soul mate had died in the Gulf War, and his soul mate's spouse also had a platonic soul mate. Jensen's brother's soul mate had already been married and settled when they found each other—as a result Josh had moved across the country to fricken Nowhere, Maine. He claimed he was happy, but Jensen didn't think his cowboy boot wearing, rodeo-loving brother was really perfectly happy in the Lobster Capitol of the world. Platonic soul mates just seemed really, really complicated. He had gotten lucky for sure. He couldn't wait to meet Misha.

When Jensen was eighteen and moved into his freshman college dorm, he met his roommate, Dmitri. He was quirky, a little funny looking, and while Jensen thought he had really pretty blue eyes, he would drink bleach before he would admit it. He'd heard horror stories about people comparing their randomly assigned freshman roommates to spawn from hell, so Jensen knew he was lucky that he and Dmitri clicked right off the bat. While they had different personalities for sure, they had similar temperaments, which made living together easy even when they didn't agree. Despite having different interests, more often than not they accompanied the other to intramural sports games or student art shows or home football games or the Russian Language Club's mixers. There was no denying that they were different from each other, but Jensen had never felt like they were wrong for each other. He had gotten lucky for sure.

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Jensen turned partially in his desk chair as Dmitri walked into their room with nothing but a towel around his waist and a shower caddy in his hand. He used some sort of special biodegradable soap and shampoo, ever the socially and environmentally conscious do-gooder. He slid the caddy onto the floor and then nudged it under the bed with his foot. Rather than drying off or getting dressed, Dmitri walked around the bunk beds and sat down at his computer desk. Jensen watched him through the space of the bunk beds and chewed on his lip as he watched water drip from Dmitri's hair—the water making the dark brown look black—and onto his shoulders, rolling over his pectoral muscles. A couple of drops caught on and were absorbed by the modesty patch over

his heart. The pink Hello Kitty modesty patch.

In Western society, people had long ago taken to hiding the name of their soul mate until they found each other. Some Asian countries had recently taken up the trend as well, but more as a fashion statement than the prudish, stick-up-the-ass attitude it had originated from. The patches used to be plain bandages that wrapped around the torso. They had eventually evolved into a small, soft adhesive patch that varied in shape, size, and color depending on the latest fashion trends. Jensen's was a plain piece of cloth that matched his skin tone, so clearly he wasn't up on the newest fads, but he did know that for college aged men it was not Hello Kitty. It hadn't been bumble bees either, which was the design Dmitri had been using when they first moved in together a couple of months ago.

"Dude, why are you staring?" Dmitri asked without taking his eyes off his computer screen.

Jensen started slightly, but didn't allow his roommate to get the best of him. "Dude, why are you working? Midterms are over. We've got a four day weekend."

Dmitri turned his head to look at him, and then lifted a hand to direct his monitor in Jensen's direction. He was playing that weird ass puzzle game he'd become addicted to a couple of weeks ago. Jensen had tried it once and gotten fed up after three minutes. Dmitri had basically been spending all his free time as of late answering riddles and running through mazes and other stupid crap that was probably actually really good for the brain, but consequently he'd kind of sort of been ignoring Jensen. That was the reason Jensen turned his nose up at the sight and made a face.

"Dude. You need help. You couldn't even put clothes on before getting back to that thing?"

"Dude. I had a revelation in the shower," he replied, turning his monitor back and tapping away at the keys.

"Is that what you do in the shower? Think about that stupid game?"

"What else would I think about in the shower?"

Dmitri tilted his head back slightly and his eyes cut over to Jensen. He had a salacious, knowing smile on his lips that had Jensen blushing and turning away. He frowned at his email and ignored Dmitri's chuckling. Dmitri had told him early on that he batted for both teams, which hadn't really bothered Jensen, except when he was reminded every so often that that included *him* as a possible hitting partner. And it didn't really so much bother him as it just...made him blush like a middle schooler. Which was obnoxious.

Jensen couldn't focus on returning the email from his mother, so he ignored it in favor of complaining to his roommate.

"I thought you said we were going to go to that party or whatever tonight. Don't you need to get dressed?"

"Oh, right," Dmitri said distractedly. "Well, it's not really a party. And we can show up whenever."

Jensen frowned and slumped down in his uncomfortable, school provided chair. He opened up a game of spider solitaire and thought about how much he didn't even want to go to the stupid non-party. It was mostly Dmitri's friends anyway and all they ever did was smoke pot, listen to weird music, and talk about politics. Barely two minutes later Jensen had already run out of moves on his game and was about three seconds away from falling into a seriously foul mood. He started as two arms wrapped around his shoulders.

“Jensen, don’t sulk,” Dmitri said he put his face right next to his. “I’m dressed. We can go now.”

“I’m not sulking,” Jensen sulked.

Dmitri laughed and stood up. He nudged his shoulder. “Come on, let’s go.”

Jensen turned around and saw that Dmitri was in a pair of old jeans and a blue T-shirt that highlighted his eyes. His hair was still a little wet and his smile was friendly—and a little indulgent, like he knew Jensen was pouting like a baby because Dmitri wasn’t available 24/7 to entertain him. He thought Misha was okay with that because he kind of liked the fact that Jensen wanted to be around him so much. Of course that was making a lot of assumptive leaps on his part, but Jensen felt he wasn’t wrong in his assessment. So, he grinned and grabbed his wallet off the edge of his desk.

“Let’s go.”

They debated the merits of eating dinner at the student union versus the campus cafeteria as they made their way toward the fork in the path. Jensen won the argument and they had a version of pot roast at the student union. One of Jensen’s friends from intramural lacrosse, Ty Pennington, joined them and ate five bowls of cereal for his dinner. They invited him to come with them to the party and the trio made it to Dmitri’s friend Vicki’s dorm room a little before eight o’clock.

As Jensen had suspected, Vicki and her friends were listening to some crappy Indie music and discussing the current administration’s policy on amnesty and deportation of the children from Central America crossing the United States’ borders. Jensen’s friend Ty glanced at him with a side-eyed look when he heard the topic of conversation.

Jensen shrugged at him. “They have weed.”

“Ooo,” Ty said and stepped into the room to introduce himself and ingratiate himself to a potential new supplier.

Jensen liked Ty, but he was a bit of a pothead. Dmitri bumped shoulders with him to get him to move from the doorway. Jensen settled down on one of the beds in the corner so he could lean up against the wall. The room was just big enough that the girls had opted to put both their beds on the floor rather than bunk them, but that meant with two desks, two wardrobes, and two dressers the walls were completely lined with furniture leaving on a tiny square of carpet in the middle of the room. Dmitri sat on the floor next to Vicki and accepted the joint from her fingers, taking a long drag and holding his breath as he listened to her argue about the “evil fucking Republicans.” Jensen tried not to be offended on his father’s behalf.

When the blunt came around to him he declined and passed it on to the redheaded girl next to him. Dmitri was watching him with a little smile, and Jensen ignored how it seemed like he thought he was so cute for being a “good boy.” It wasn’t that he was a goody-two shoes who never did anything wrong. It was just that he’d tried weed in high school and hadn’t been all that impressed. Besides, with how much smoke was hanging heavy and thick in the small room, he’d probably get a contact buzz anyway.

After an hour or so, Jensen figured he wasn’t the only one becoming bored since someone suggested they play truth or dare. Dmitri turned his head from where he’d been shotgunning his latest hit from Vicki (and Jensen hadn’t been pissed off about that, it just seemed like if the joint was right there, why couldn’t he use that instead?) and gave enthusiastic agreement. Everyone else murmured agreement too, and Jensen decided he needed to leave. That game was dangerous enough when played with people who were sober. He scooted to the edge of the bed and stood up.

“Well, you guys have fun with that,” Jensen said. “I think I’m going to head back. Ty you staying?”

“Uh...” Ty looked up from where he had a hand pretty far up a girl’s skirt and looked at him dumbly, eyes cloudy. He looked utterly stoned—more so than anyone else in the room.

“Don’t go,” Dmitri said and got to his feet. He took the joint from Vicki’s hand and crossed the tiny room. “You just need to relax and then you won’t mind playing.”

Jensen frowned as Dmitri pushed him gently back onto the bed and sat beside him, nudging out the redhead. He held the joint out to him and Jensen looked dubiously at it. Dmitri rubbed his back comfortingly.

“Do you really not want to try it? You don’t have to.”

“It’s not that. It’s just, I tried it in high school. It didn’t really do anything for me.”

Dmitri chuckled. “That’s because you were using some weak ass shit probably cut with oregano and sold to the preppy upper-class white kids at four times the street value.”

Jensen frowned at him.

“You need to try to the good stuff.”

He offered the joint again and Jensen took it from him.

“Truth or dare?” Vicki asked the boy next to her.

“Truth.”

“Have you ever performed or had performed on you...oral sex?”

The room burst into giggles and Jensen put the joint to his lips. He looked at Dmitri, but his eyes were looking down—probably trying not to laugh at him as he looked like a spaz while he took a hit.

“No,” the boy groused. “Neither.”

“Would you like to?” the redhead, now next to Dmitri, asked as Jensen coughed when the smoke filled his mouth. He coughed again and thrust the joint back at Dmitri who took it and slapped his back gently.

“Is that an offer or a question?” the guy asked.

The girl just giggled.

“Truth or dare?” he asked her.

“Dare,” she said challengingly.

“I dare you to perform oral sex on me.”

The room burst into noise—complaints, wolf whistles, laughing. Jensen didn’t hear most of it because Dmitri’s hand was cupping the side of his face and for some reason that made the blood rush loudly in his ears.

“You’re doing it wrong, J,” Dmitri said. “No wonder you never liked it. You have to get it into

your lungs.”

“I—I can’t. I tried cigarettes once and it’s the same thing. It just feels so unnatural to breathe in smoke like that.”

“Okay, one rule, no oral sex!” Vicki said and she slapped the guy’s shoulder who had asked for it.

“Okay, okay, I dare you to describe for me how you would give me oral sex.”

“That’s acceptable,” Vicki said.

“What?!” the girl screeched.

“Okay,” Dmitri said. “Let me help you. Just part your lips, and then breathe easily, but deeply through your mouth, okay?”

“How will that work with the joint if my lips are—”

Jensen stopped talking and barely even understood that the redhead’s words were in English as she described going down on some dude because Dmitri had put the joint to his own lips and inhaled a large hit of smoke. Then he leaned forward and lined up their lips, getting much closer than he had to Vicki as they were almost touching. Belatedly Jensen felt the warmth of the sweet smoke in his mouth and closed his eyes as he drew it into his lungs with a slow, deep breath.

“Hold it,” Dmitri said, his lips brushing Jensen’s.

Jensen held the smoke in his lungs and the effect was immediate—everything went a little fuzzy around the edges and he felt...really good. He opened his eyes and found Dmitri still right in front of his face, smiling softly. Jensen smiled back, letting the smoke curl languidly out of his mouth.

“Truth or dare, Dmitri,” the redhead asked.

“Dare,” Dmitri said, not pulling back from Jensen or breaking eye contact.

“I dare you to make out with your roommate.”

Dmitri’s lips twitched into a smirk and he lifted one eyebrow in question at Jensen. Jensen was floating high on a pile of feel-good clouds. He gave a nonchalant shrug of his shoulders. Dmitri leaned in and kissed him. But that was such an inadequate term. Dmitri’s hand slid from his face into his hair and pulled him close, their lips pushed and pulled apart, and it was hot and wet and they weren’t even using tongues. But then—oh, there was the tongue. Jensen melted down onto the bed with Dmitri on top of him. He had no idea how long they made out for, but his lips were swollen and numb by the time they left Vicki’s room around midnight.

As they walked along the poorly lit path back to their dorm, Dmitri whistled a tuneless song softly. Jensen wondered if he wasn’t upset by the fact that he’d made out with a dude because he was still high, or because it really wasn’t that big of a deal.

“Hey, Jensen,” Dmitri said when they were at the halfway point, the path taking them through the woods and making them feel completely alone together.

“Yeah, D?”

“Do you...would you mind telling me the name of your soul mate?”

Jensen felt the nice easy rapport slip away and be replaced with slightly awkward unease. It didn't seem right to talk about his soul mate when he was still giddy from kissing someone else.

"I don't know...I mean, it's not really a big deal, right? It's just a name. And I know the whole hide it from the world thing is old fashioned at all, but..."

"It's okay. You don't have to tell me. You're just...certain it's a girl?"

Jensen nodded and wouldn't look at Dmitri. "Yeah. Pretty sure I know a girl's name when I see it."

"Oh, okay. Sorry. Didn't mean to make you uncomfortable."

"It's alright. I mean, I get it. What happened tonight was..."

Jensen trailed off and glanced at Dmitri. His head was turned slightly away, but Jensen could read body language well enough to know that he was blushing just as hard as he was.

"Yeah, tonight *was*," Dmitri agreed.

Jensen smiled and shook his head. "Tonight was something we will *never* speak of again," he said playfully.

Dmitri laughed. "Yes, sir. My lips are sealed."

Jensen felt relief flood his body. He was glad he and Dmitri were okay. He couldn't imagine what he would do if he lost his friendship with him.

~~Two Months Later~~

Jensen ducked down to wave goodbye and say thanks to the sophomore who had driven him from his home back to school after winter break. They'd met up on the virtual corkboard where students with cars posted their availability to give rides to certain destinations, usually in exchange for gas money. It had been nice to go home and see his family and have a break from school, but he was eager for the new semester to begin and to see Dmitri again. They had texted and emailed over break—so much in fact that his mother had asked if he was dating someone—but it wasn't the same as being able to hang out.

He dragged his suitcase up the two flights of stairs to his room and was thrilled to see the door to their room propped open. That meant Dmitri was already back. He said hello to a few of his hallmates and looked at the flyers on the wall advertising back to school parties. Jensen entered the room and his insult in lieu of a greeting died on his lips when he saw Dmitri wasn't alone. He'd only met her for a couple of minutes over four months ago, but he was pretty certain the woman in the room was Dmitri's mother.

"Hey, Jensen," Dmitri said. "Have a good break?"

"Yeah, it was great."

"This is my mom. Mom, you remember, Jensen, right?"

"Oh, yes," the woman said with a broad smile and walked over and took Jensen's face in her

hands. She squished his cheeks together and a waft of patchouli scented air hit his nose. “How could I forget such an adorable little pretty baby face like this?”

“Mom,” Dmitri hissed. “Leave him alone.”

The woman laughed and let go of Jensen to turn to her son.

“Oh he doesn’t mind. Well, I’m going to get going so I can get most of the way home before it gets dark. Here, these are for you.”

“*Mo~om!*” Dmitri groaned and pushed her hand back to her.

Jensen wasn’t sure what was in the plastic baggie, but his best guess was shrooms.

“Come on, a little weed is one thing but I’m not messing with this crap. Plus, we can’t have it in the room. If I get caught with it they’ll punish Jensen too and that’s not fair.”

Jensen smiled to himself as he opened his suitcase and started putting his clothes—freshly laundered by his mother—into his wardrobe. His mother would be scandalized by the idea of Jensen even drinking, and here Dmitri’s mother was trying to push a hallucinogenic on him.

“Oh, alright, alright,” Dmitri’s mother consented and put the baggie back in her purse. “I want you to be a good boy, but not *too* good.”

“Not a problem,” Dmitri laughed.

His mother took his face in her hands and kissed his cheek.

“I’ll miss you, Misha. Please consider coming home for spring break.”

Jensen’s head snapped up at the name.

“Yeah, sure,” his roommate said. “I’ll go home for spring break instead of heading somewhere with sun, surf, and mostly naked bodies.”

His mother patted his cheek, and then smiled at Jensen before taking her leave, pulling the door closed behind her. Jensen watched his roommate unpack his suitcase. He could feel that his eyes were wide and about to fall out of his head. After closing the drawer containing his underwear, his roommate turned and caught sight of his expression. He recoiled in moderate distress.

“W-what? Is there a spider or something?” He immediately began to look around over his head and brushing off his shoulders.

Jensen stepped closer to him. “What did your mother call you?”

“Hmm?” he asked, still distracted by potential eight-legged terrors.

“Your mother...she said she would miss you, but she called you—not your name.”

He tilted his head in confusion, and then his features cleared. “Oh. Misha. She calls me Misha.”

“*Misha*,” Jensen stated harshly.

His roommate—Dmitri—*Misha*—looked at him funny, and a little bit like he was scared.

“Uh, yeah.”



“Misha. As in, Misha. As in—” Jensen whipped his shirt over his head. Misha’s eyes went comically large with surprise. His mouth dropped open as he noticed Jensen beginning to peel off his modesty patch. Then Jensen flung the patch to the floor. “*Misha?*”

Misha stared at Jensen’s chest—the place over his heart—where his name was written in a script that was vaguely reminiscent of Misha’s handwriting now that Jensen thought about it. Misha reached out a hand and Jensen felt his breath hitch when his fingertips brushed lightly over the name. Then Misha pulled his own T-shirt off and peeled the dinosaur decorated modesty patch off his chest. Jensen’s name was written across his heart in neat block letters—the way he wrote when he was being extra careful.

Their eyes lingered on their names for a moment, and then they looked up. Misha grinned and leapt forward, hugging Jensen tightly. Jensen sighed in what could only be described as sheer joy as he hugged his soul mate back and their hearts touched. It wasn’t even awkward at all to be hugging a dude when they were both naked from the waist up. Dmitri, no, Misha—was his soul mate after all. They pulled back, still smiling. And then Jensen slapped his arm.

“Ow! The hell?”

“No, the hell to you! Why didn’t you say anything?! My name is right there. How many Jensen’s have you ever met before?”

“Well, none. And when I saw your name on the slip telling me who my roommate would be, I was ecstatic—I just knew that it was going to be you. And when we met—I felt it, but—this is all your fault!”

“My fault?”

“Yes! I tried to tell you at the beginning. I brought up the whole soul mate thing and you started talking about how you were happy you had a girl’s name because you didn’t want a platonic soul mate and blah blah blah. I figured I must be mistaken because you were so sure.”

“Well,” Jensen flushed a little remembering how naïve he’d been such a short time ago, especially after being given a lecture by their RA about how soul mates didn’t have to be platonic just because they were the same sex. He knew that then, of course, but it was the only thing that made sense to him at the time. “I didn’t know I was supposed to be looking for someone who went by Dmitri. What’s the deal with that?”

“My legal name, the one on my birth certificate, is Dmitri. Misha is the name my mom always called me though. It’s Russian. And it is definitely a boy’s name.”

“Oh. So, why did you decide to start going by Dmitri?”

Misha gave a lopsided smile. “I thought it would make it easier to find my soul mate if I went by my ‘real’ name.”

Jensen laughed. “I guess that one backfired.”

“Yeah,” Misha—and that name really did fit him better—said with a smile. He stepped closer and smoothed his hand over Jensen’s forearm. The contact felt good. Of course it did. All touches from his soul mate would always feel good and right—forever. Jensen gave him a wry smile.

“Well, the Ackles genes strike again.”

“What do you mean?”

“Platonic soul mates. It must run in my family. My uncle, my brother, me...it’s not a big deal. It might even be better this way.”

Misha stepped back and dropped his hand. Jensen frowned slightly at the loss of contact.

“Oh. Oh, yeah, of course. Um. I’m just going to finish unpacking.”

Jensen nodded, but didn’t say anything as Misha turned away from him and put his shirt back on. He didn’t need the slightly psychic connection that existed between soul mates to know Misha was upset—his shoulders were slumped and his movements were a little stiff. Jensen put his own shirt back on and decided not to make him talk about it if he wasn’t ready. They were soul mates; they had the rest of their lives to work everything out. For now he would give Misha his space. It probably was a shock to find out his soul mate was platonic—that really did shift the way a person had to think about their lives. Jensen supposed he’d always considered the possibility, so he wasn’t bothered by it so much.

They unpacked in silence, but it wasn’t uncomfortable. Then Misha sat at his desk and opened up that stupid puzzle game. It did look like he was at a higher level than he had been when they’d left for break. He wondered if the goober had played that game all during break too. Jensen decided he better read some of the book that was assigned for his English class. Classes hadn’t even started yet and the teacher had already thrown an assignment at them. He hadn’t touched it over break, so he was starting from the beginning.

Jensen propped a pillow against the wall and settled back on it on his bed, which was the lower bunk, and began reading. He’d only been reading for about five minutes when he felt the mattress shift. Then he was confused further when the book was plucked out of his hands and tossed aside. He was distracted by the disappearing book so he didn’t quite catch Misha was crawling on top of him until he was settled firmly in his lap. Jensen gaped at him and then Misha took his face in his hands and kissed him. Like the first time—it was natural, effortless, and so much more than a kiss. Their hands roamed over each other’s backs and necks and into their hair. When they finally broke apart for air, Jensen felt a little dizzy. Misha put his hands back to Jensen’s face and stroked his cheekbones as he smiled gently at him.

“Are you sure we’re platonic, Jensen?”

Jensen blinked a few times to clear his mind of the hazy fog of “happy” and “feels so, *so* good” swirling around his brain. Then he shook his head.

“No, actually, I’m not 100% certain. We better test the theory.”

Misha grinned and leaned down to kiss him again.

## **2. Heart Glows in Proximity to Soul Mate: Cockles – General Audiences**

*Warnings: none (unless you count gratuitous baseball jargon)*

Misha felt his eyelids drooping. He did his best to keep his grip on his pencil, but he could feel it slipping from his fingers and his mouth going slack as he slipped into a light sleep.

“*Collins!*”

Misha snorted and sat up straight. The other kids in his health class snickered as he was singled out by the teacher. It really wasn't his fault though. Health class was useful for two things: driver's ed and sex ed (and even that last one was questionable). Everything else was a boring waste of his life.

"Yes, Mr. Thompson?" Misha asked, barely succeeding in stifling a yawn.

"Well, I *know* you did your reading last night, so please, share with the class why it is that physical chest-to-chest contact is required to activate the soul mate recognition bond?"

Misha tried to disguise his sigh as a deep, steadying breath. Courtship rituals and soul mating etiquette was an extremely dry topic and all but outdated in this day and age. The ways in which two strangers could get their chests to touch had certainly changed over the last several decades, but he dutifully gave the textbook response that was expected of him.

"Physical contact for initiating a soul mating bond evolved as a way to naturally select for peacefully inclined individuals as violent personalities rarely found a mating partner and therefore didn't reproduce and propagate their genes."

"Very good. You did do your reading."

Misha couldn't let the teacher start forming a good opinion of him.

"It also made it easier to have guilt-free one night stands."

The class laughed and Mr. Thompson glared at him.

"Mr. Thompson?" a girl in the front row asked with a hand up in the air.

"Yes, Brittany?"

"If Heart Fire evolved as a way to make it easier to find your soul mate, why are some pairs couples that can't reproduce?"

"That's a good question. Misha?"

Misha hoped the teacher didn't see him rolling his eyes. "Because the trait being selected for is peacefulness, not mating ability."

"Correct. Why are the smart ones always such smart asses?"

"Well, it is right there in the description."

The class giggled and the teacher huffed out an exasperated sigh.

"Moving on. Describe for me some of the signs you might notice that will signal to you that you have found someone you would want to initiate a soul mate recognition trial with. Daniel?"

Misha tuned out the rest of class and doodled in the margins of his notes to help keep himself awake. He drew an aimless, repetitive pattern, and it wasn't until the bell rang, pulling him out of his stupor, that he realized he'd been swirling the number twenty-one over and over again. He smirked when he finally saw it. Number twenty-one: Ackles. The catcher and team captain for the Kennedy High Tigers—arch rivals of Misha's school, the Jefferson High Screaming Eagles. Misha was captain of the baseball team in his own right and played shortstop. There was a game tomorrow night—the opener of the season—and Misha was going to crush that cocky SOB as payback for ruining their perfect record in the last game of the season last year. Oh yes, this year

Jefferson High was going back to Regionals, and they were going to do it with a *perfect* record.

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Misha watched the opponent's dugout carefully, his eyes scanning for that dirty blond hair in those stupid gelled spikes and those freckles that made Ackles look like he was nine. He almost lost his balance while stretching his quads because he was leaning to look around some giant who was blocking his view. Apparently they must have had a transfer from another school because Misha didn't think anyone from Kennedy's JV team would have gotten that big in a year. Finally he just decided to trot over under the guise of the captain being a good sport and welcoming the away team. Misha walked past the giant and leaned on the rail, looking down into the dugout. His eyes scanned the mostly familiar faces, but he didn't see Ackles.

"Hey, guys, welcome to Jefferson Field." The players all narrowed their eyes suspiciously. "Ready to lose?"

Grumbling broke out among the players along with a few rude gestures and pantomimes directed toward Misha. He just laughed.

"So where's your fearless leader? Did he get cut from the team?"

"No, I'm right here, Mish."

Misha stiffened at the familiar (though deeper than he remembered it) voice that came from behind him—using that obnoxious nickname. Misha turned around slowly. He raised his eyes to look up into Ackles' eyes which were definitely a good three or four inches higher than they'd been last year. He had to be close to six feet tall. And he grinned when he saw the clear surprise written all over Misha's face.

"You still playing *short* stop?"

Misha snapped his mouth shut and glared at the non-subtle dig.

"Yep. Though I wish your team could manage something other than ground balls. I mean, it makes for good field practice, but come on, guys. Try to get one off the ground."

The rest of the team grumbled while Jensen's eye twitched as he tried to repress his irritation and keep his fake smile in place. Misha was proud of himself. The Tigers were a good team, but they notoriously had a problem with grounding out during high pressure situations.

"Looking forward to a good game tonight, kitties."

"Fuck off, Collins!" someone shouted from the dugout.

"Padasmecki!" the coach yelled. "Watch your language and shut-up! You're not even first string!"

The freshman's team sniggered at him and Misha walked away feeling satisfied that he'd gotten in two good digs at the captain. What a dick.

Since they were the away team, the Tigers batted first. After a strike out, a ground out, and a pop fly ball, they went three and out and Jensen hadn't even batted. Misha batted fourth for his team as clean up. They'd gotten two outs, but Penikett made it on base with a double to left field. Now all Misha had to do was drive him in. He stepped up to home plate and tossed a disdainful look at the catcher.

“Hey, Collins,” Ackles jibed, “Are you ready for your first pitch this season? Hope it’s not like the last pitch last season. Total whiff, if I recall correctly, right?”

Misha gritted his teeth and swung at a ball that was way below the strike zone and would have been called a ball. He connected, but it went foul down the third baseline.

“Striiiiiiiiike one!” the umpire yelled.

Misha reset and ignored the hulking catcher behind him.

“So, have you heard about this new documentary about the poor whales in Sea World and stuff? It was really brave of your mom to come forward like that.”

Misha let out a grunt of annoyance and slammed the next pitch. He was ahead of it though and it popped over their heads and went over the fence behind home plate and out of play.

“Striiiiiiiiiiiiike two!” the umpire hollered.

Misha took a moment to hit the dirt out of his cleats with his bat so that he could glare at Jensen. He was grinning behind his mask as he settled back into his crouch. Misha stepped in the batter’s box and resolved not to let anything get to him this time.

“It’s a good thing you bat right handed. All my teammates think you have such a cute ass.”

Misha just smiled and leaned forward a little bit more—sticking his butt out at the dugout. “Let them enjoy the show all they like,” he said.

Then he wound up as the next pitch was released.

“I personally like the bulge in my face,” Jensen said.

A spasm of surprise went through Misha’s body and he choked up too much on the bat. He connected with the ball in a weak hit that couldn’t even be classified as a bunt. He stared at the ball as it managed to roll onto the field of play.

“Run, you jackass!” his coach yelled.

Misha dropped the bat and sprinted for first base, but he knew that Jensen only had to take two steps to pick up the ball and unsurprisingly it made it to the first baseman long before he did.

“You’rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrre out!” the first base umpire yelled.

Misha stood still, seething in anger, mostly at himself for letting Jensen distract him. The Tigers left the field and the Eagles came on.

“Collins!” his coach yelled. “Get rid of that helmet and get your glove! Hustle!”

Misha obeyed and took his place at shortstop, which gave him a nice line of sight to the batter’s box. Jensen was up at bat first, and he smirked at Misha as he took a couple of practice swings. The pitcher stretched out his arm and took his place on the mound. Misha waited for Jensen’s eyes to flick off the pitcher, like he knew they would even though that was the worst thing a batter could do. He moved his hand fast, so he knew it would catch Jensen’s attention, and then moved it slowly (and as discreetly as possible) to cup his “bulge.” His “bulge” which was really his protective cup, but whatever. Jensen just rolled his eyes and focused on the pitcher again. Misha knew that wouldn’t get him...but he needed to draw attention to it so that when Jensen couldn’t help himself and looked back over one more time...Misha running his tongue up his index finger

was inextricably linked with his “bulge.”

Jensen stared. And then blinked, startled, when he heard the loud smack of a ball hitting the catcher’s mitt. He looked down and seemed to be surprised that a pitch had even occurred.

“Striiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiike one!” the umpire boomed right in his ear.

Jensen shot Misha a nasty look. Misha waved his fingers in a “come on, bring it” gesture and then smacked his fist into his glove. Jensen looked back at the pitcher and didn’t look away this time. And that was fine because he hit a hard line drive straight into Misha’s waiting glove. He hadn’t even made it a quarter of the way to first base before he was called out. Misha gave him a wink as Jensen made his way back to the dugout. He wasn’t putting up with any of the Tigers’ bullshit this year.

When the game was over, the Eagles had won three to two, but neither team captain had gotten a single hit all night. The teams paraded past each other with the obligatory high five and “goodgamegoodgamegoodgame,” mumbled over and over. When they reached each other Jensen and Misha paused and did more than a little posturing.

“Well, how about that. First game of the year and it’s a loss. I really hope that won’t be indicative of your whole season,” Misha said with mock sympathy.

“Don’t worry, Collins. We’re going to crush everyone this year. We just took pity on you the first game because of how much we destroyed you last year.”

Misha’s eyebrow twitched. That game had been embarrassing. They’d lost twelve to one.

“We wanted you guys to win at least one this year. But we’ll beat you in the second game. And we’ll be sure to win Regionals against whatever team we play because let’s face it—it won’t be the *Crying* Eagles.”

Misha narrowed his eyes. “A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.”

Jensen frowned at him. “You trying to pull some deep, literary bullshit on me?”

“No. Just pointing out that you look like Big Bird now.”

“Fuck you,” Jensen swore, rather uncharacteristically, and looked away with red staining his cheeks.

Misha felt a little bad. Growing that much that fast had probably made things a little awkward for him. Although he was certain it was nothing but attractive to boys and girls alike. As soon as he got a little more muscle and grew into it he’d be one of the hottest people on the planet. But, Misha was nothing if not kind, even to his enemies. So, he gave Jensen a slap on the back as he started to walk away.

“That’s not necessarily a bad thing. I think Big Bird is kind of hot myself.”

Jensen was startled into a laugh. And then he shook his head.

“That’s actually really weird,” he called after him.

Misha didn’t look back and shrugged in reply.

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Three months later the Eagles were still undefeated and they only had two games left in the season. Their next game was against the Tigers, who also would be undefeated, if they hadn't lost the first game of the year. Misha grinned thinking about it. Even if the Eagles lost their next two games (impossible) they were guaranteed a spot at Regionals to play for a chance to go to Nationals. The Tigers would go too if they didn't suffer any more losses. Well, they were about to suffer one more loss.

Misha took his place in the batter's box; he'd been moved to the third position and their leadoff hitter had gotten on base. Some of the pressure was off him as he wouldn't be the last out even if he struck out, but he had to be careful not to ground out to second or the shortstop because that would be an easy double play.

Jensen was crouched just behind him and Misha could vaguely see his hand moving in front of his crotch as he signaled the pitcher. Misha made sure to keep his attention on the pitcher.

"Wow, really choking up on the bat there, Mish." Misha gnashed his teeth at the nickname. "Keeping it really close to your chest. That's kind of kinky."

Misha almost rolled his eyes, but kept them on the pitcher as he wound up. "That all you got, Ackles? You're losing your touch."

"I just think you and that bat look awfully cozy. Holy shit! Is your Heart Fire activating?"

"What?!" Misha looked down at his chest in a panic, which was ridiculous because of course it couldn't be activated without touching another person, but he had to see with his own eyes. He looked back up in time to see the ball almost on him. He took a swing and missed by a mile.

"Striiiiiiiiiiiiike one!"

Misha groaned softly and let his shoulders slump. "I am such a chump."

"You are," Jensen agreed cheerfully. "But at least you're a cute chump."

"Bite me, Ackles."

"Where, Collins?"

Misha swung and missed again as a sudden burst of heat exploded in his head and distracted him.

"Striiiiiiiiiiiiike two!"

He looked down at Jensen and just knew that his face was as red as the stripe on the Tigers' uniforms. Jensen smiled up at him, and then ducked his head a little when he saw Misha's face. Misha tried to focus on the pitcher and the ball, but he kept waiting for Jensen's next attack. He remained suspiciously silent. Misha's hands tightened on the bat. Any second now he'd pipe up and say something asinine. Any second now. Just wait for it...

"Striiiiiiiiiiiiike three!"

Misha gawked at the umpire. "That ball was three feet outside the strike zone!"

The umpire shrugged. "It was about three inches inside."

Misha's coach came storming out of the dugout in his defense.

"Are you blind, ump?!"

Misha walked away and let his coach have it out with the umpire. The umpire wasn't going to change his call, so he better just go sit his ass down on the bench and try not to make eye contact with his teammates who were partly confused and partly angry at his poor performance.

Several innings later, Jensen was up to bat for the fourth time. The game had been surprisingly high scoring for both teams, but the Eagles led eight to six. Jensen had been having just as rough a night as Misha. He'd hit two ground balls and a line drive—all straight to Misha. Three easy outs. As he approached the batter's box, the Tigers' coach yelled from the dugout.

“Crouch down, son! Close off that strike zone. Hands a little farther apart on the bat this time.”

Jensen nodded his acknowledgement and stepped into the box.

“And if you hit the ball to your boyfriend one more time, you are benched for next week's game!”

Everyone in the stands, on the field, and in both dugouts snorted with laughter or tittered with amusement. Jensen swung back to look at his coach. He looked mortified. Misha would have felt bad for him, but at two of his at bats, Jensen had messed up his hitting by telling him about his plans to do a Sports Illustrated type photo shoot of the lunch lady from his school's cafeteria, and then by asking if he thought Misha's younger half-sister would go on a date with him. He deserved a serving of his own asshole karma back on him.

Jensen hit several foul balls before finally hitting the ball to third base. It was an easy ground ball and he was called out about a second before his foot hit first base. Misha was surprised and impressed by how close it had been. He supposed those long legs were good for something.

Despite Misha's own poor showing, the Eagles won. They were already guaranteed a spot at Regionals, but the win made them feel like they really deserved it. And more than likely they'd be up against the Hornets. Honestly he'd rather play the Tigers, but it felt good to knock them out early. At the end of the “good game” line, Misha grabbed Jensen's hand after the high five to get him to stay put.

“Hey. So, you guys had a good season. It's nothing to be ashamed of.”

Jensen gave him a look and pulled his hand from Misha's. “I'm never ashamed of my team. We're really good this year, and we're deep too. Our JV is pretty awesome. We'll be kicking Eagle ass again in no time.”

“Yeah, okay, keep telling yourself that. But what I meant was that I'm sorry you didn't make it to Regionals. Not for your team, the Tigers suck—“ Jensen rolled his eyes. “—but for you, you know. It's senior year and all.”

“We're not out yet.”

Misha went very still. “What?”

“Yeah our last game is against the Hornets. We have the same record, so whoever wins next week, goes to Regionals.”

Misha crossed his arms. “I did not know that.”

“Apparently.” Jensen clapped Misha on the shoulder. “See you at Regionals, Misha.”

Misha made a face at Jensen's back. The number twenty-one staring back at him. He decided—forced himself—not to worry about it. The Hornets were a good team. They could easily beat the Tigers. Jensen was just full of himself, as usual.



The night of Regionals they got to play in a minor league stadium under really bright, professional grade lights. The field was impeccably green and manicured, and the infield was made of a soft, brown dirt mixed with red clay to give it structure. The result was a rich brown color that contrasted sharply, but beautifully with the vibrant green of the grass. The stadium was beautiful and the stands were pretty full considering it was a high school baseball game. One half was colored the bold navy blue of the Jefferson High Screaming Eagles. The other half was the bright red of the Kennedy High Tigers.

The teams were in the dugouts, getting their last minute pep talks after warm-ups. The Eagles had won the coin toss and elected to be the “home” team and therefore bat second. The national anthem had been sung, and all that was left was for the umpire to yell, “Plaaaaaaaaaaaaay ball!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”

The Eagles rushed onto the field, pumped and ready to win. The Tigers came out swinging. The game turned out to be a battle of the pitchers, neither giving up so much as a hit through four innings, and only one run was scored by a powerful, and somewhat lucky hit, by a Tigers outfielder that saw the ball just barely sailing over the fence in the far corner down the third base line. The Eagles leftfielder hadn’t had a chance to reach it in time, but it really was only luck that the ball had had just enough juice on it to squeak over.

That had been the eighth inning, so the situation wasn’t completely dire. The Eagles had two innings left to bat, but they couldn’t capitalize on runners at first and third with two outs when they batted in the eighth. They did manage to shut down the Tigers in the next inning—it was still one-nil when the Eagles came up to bat in the bottom of the ninth. The two batters before Misha both struck out—the Tigers’ pitcher was really having an amazing night.

Misha took his place in the box, under the lights, with the crowd cheering loudly. He almost didn’t hear them. If Jensen was snarking at him behind the plate, he didn’t hear him either. He let the first ball sail past him, and gave the ump an unfriendly look when he called it a strike. The second one he let go by too. He knew there was a chance it would be a strike, but it was really wide and he’d hesitated so if he hit it, it would go straight to the first baseman and game over. The umpire, of course, called it a strike. The crowd was restless. Only one out was left and Misha wasn’t even taking a swing at the pitches.

“You ever heard the poem *Casey at the Bat*?” Jensen asked.

Misha gritted his teeth and ignored him. The next pitch came, and Misha smacked it hard into the gap in right field. He saw the ball hit the warning track and then the wall as he rounded first, so he kept running, easily sailing around second base. The hit had really been a double, but he was stretching for a triple. The third base coach put up one hand and ran the other down his leg: Stop! Slide!

Misha slid and beat the ball to the base by a couple of seconds.

“Safe!” the third base ump shouted with his arms flung out wide.

The Eagles part of the crowd cheered wildly and Misha stood up and dusted the dirt off his backside. His heart was thumping and the adrenaline was pumping and blood rushed in his ears creating a roar. They weren’t out of it yet! Penikett was a great hitter. He even specialized in singles. That’s all they needed. One measly single to drive him in home and then they’d be tied. They would have the chance to win the game in a walk off. Or worst case scenario, go to extra innings. But they were *in* it now.

Misha took a generous lead off third base and had to dive back to the bag as the pitcher turned and threw the ball to the third baseman.

“Safe!”

Misha stood up and dusted off his front side. This time he took a more conservative lead. The pitch went to Penikett this time. Foul ball down the first base line. Two balls followed that. And then a strike. The crowd was screaming now. One more strike and the Tigers would win. The pitcher wound up and let the ball go, and Penikett stepped into his stance, looking like he was going to wail on it, but then he choked up at literally the last second and bunted to third. It caught everyone by surprise, even Misha. But only for a split second. Misha took off for home. The pitcher and third baseman went after the ball. The pitcher picked it up and looked between first and home. The hesitation made him panic. He threw it home, but slightly off target. Jensen reached out and grabbed it. Misha dove for home plate and Jensen dived for Misha. They crashed in a singularly bone-jarring collision.

Misha didn't think he blacked out, but he definitely got disoriented and lost track of where he was and what was going on for a second. He shook his head slightly and realized he was staring at the brown dirt of the infield. But, his face wasn't smashed in it. He was a couple of inches above it because he was lying on something. He took stock of his body and realized he must have landed on top of Jensen. That was definitely a warm body he felt beneath him. Very warm in fact. His chest kind of felt like—it was on fire.

He sat up quickly, and his head swam for a moment. When he was able to focus again, he noticed that he was straddling Jensen and the crowd had become hushed—and they were all staring at him. Jensen was looking up at him with wide, shocked eyes, his mask having been knocked off in the collision. But he wasn't looking at his face. His eyes were trained on a spot lower down. Misha looked down and even through the thick white jersey he wore and the word Eagles sewn onto the front, he was very clearly and extremely brightly exhibiting the bluish glow of Heart Fire. He looked down at Jensen and saw nothing.

That couldn't be. Heart Fire couldn't be activated for only one person. Then he glimpsed the faintest impression of light coming out from under the protective chest plate Jensen wore. Misha fumbled with the clasp that held it in place and pulled it aside—and there—Jensen's heart glowed through his jersey. Warm and familiar and so beautiful it made Misha's whole body ache.

Jensen sat up slowly and reached out a hand to touch Misha's chest. Misha flipped the chest guard over Jensen's head so he could see the sweet, pulsing glow of his soul mate's heart—shining just for him. Jensen's hand slid up his chest, over his neck, and then he hooked his fingers on the batting helmet, throwing it off to the ground. His fingers curled around the back of Misha's head, tangling in his hair, and pulled him close. Their first kiss was so hot it sparked like electricity. This was what it felt like to belong with someone.

Distantly, Misha heard the roaring screams of the crowd. Nowadays it was incredibly rare for soul mates to find each other and activate their Heart Fire in public. The fans at the Division Two High School Baseball Regionals Championship were really getting a show.

“Um,” Misha heard a gruff voice say, “I know this is special moment for you two, but the play isn't over.”

Misha and Jensen pulled apart, momentarily confused. Then they saw that they sat about a foot from home plate and the ball lay on the ground a few inches away. Misha lunged for the base, but felt his body drawn up short as Jensen shoved the ball against his shoulder.

“You'rrrrrrrrrrre ouuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuut!” the umpire yelled.

The Tigers fans went wild and the players on the field and the dugout threw their hats in the air and started screaming. They all rushed home plate and Misha found himself nudged out of Jensen's lap and left behind in the dirt as Jensen was carried off on their shoulders. Misha stared up at the bright lights of the field.

"Fuck."

The Eagles fans trudged dejectedly out of the stadium, but did their best to be positive for the losing team members. The Tigers were loud and boisterous as they made plans to go to the nearest pizza place for an impromptu celebration. Misha waited a few feet away from the Tigers' bus, and his teammates were kind enough not to rush him even though they all must be in miserable moods. Before he got on his own team's bus, Jensen spotted him. He jogged over and did nothing to check his excited grin.

"Hey," he said, a little breathless.

"Hey," Misha replied, a little flatly.

"Um. So. Do you want to come with us? I know the other guys wouldn't mind. And I...I'd like to, um, just, be with you some more."

Misha gave him a small smile. The feeling was more than mutual if the intensity of their still glowing Heart Fire was any indication. It would fade eventually, but the initial activation was going to continue glowing, brighter when they were near each other, for the next several days. Right now it was actually bathing their faces in the serene, warm blue tones of their shared happiness.

"We can hang tomorrow," Misha said. "You're going to celebrate with your team at a victory party. I'm going to go wallow with mine at a consolation party."

"Yeah..." Jensen trailed off, and bit gently at his lower lip, looking a little concerned.

"And tomorrow," Misha continued, "we can meet up. And you can *console* me personally."

He gave Jensen a little smile and wink so that his meaning wouldn't be lost. Jensen grinned and reached for Misha. He pulled him close and kissed him with such joy that Misha almost forgot that he was devastated that he was a senior and would never get to go to Nationals. Jensen pulled back and stroked his fingertips down Misha's cheek. He leaned forward and gave him one more sweet kiss.

"I think this is the best night of my life," he said with a little awe in his voice.

"Yeah? Unfortunately this is also the best night of mine, you fucker."

Jensen laughed and kissed him.

"See you tomorrow, Mish."

Misha scowled, but he found that the nickname wasn't annoying anymore. He turned and walked to his team's bus. As soon as he got on, all of his teammates started "Ooooo-ing" him in high pitched voices and fake making out with each other. Misha blushed.

"Man, shut up," he grumbled. But he was smiling.

Misha was at Nationals after all—but he was in the stands watching his soul mate’s team in the final round of play. The Tigers were going into the final round with a perfect record and the smart bet was on the team from the little town in the middle of nowhere that had beat up the teams from larger and more baseball oriented cities. Both teams were playing well, and it was tied in the bottom of the ninth. Jensen was second up to bat with a runner on second. It was almost a given that the Tigers would win. But of course, they had to win with dramatic flair. Jensen crushed a ball to centerfield—right over the fence. It was a walk off homerun and the Tigers won by two.

Wild celebrations broke out and Jensen was once again carried around on his teammates’ shoulders. The teams were shuffled to the sides so that the trophy presentations could begin immediately. The third place game had been played earlier in the day and the winning team was filing onto the field. Jensen slipped away from his team and met Misha at the fence. They both hooked their fingers on the lattice of the chain link, one or two fingers overlapping.

“Congratulations,” Misha said sincerely.

Jensen smiled. “Thank you.”

“I’m really glad you won.”

Jensen laughed and leaned his forehead against the fence.

“No, you’re not.”

Misha chuckled and said, “No, I’m not.”

He leaned his head forward against Jensen’s through the fence and they stood as close as they were able. Even though it wasn’t visible anymore, Misha could still feel his Heart Fire burning strongly within him.

“But I’ll still give you your ‘consolation’ prize anyway.”

Jensen blushed and laughed.

“Thanks. Love you, Mish.”

“Love you too, tiger.”

### **3. ABO: True Mates: Destiel - Explicit**

*Warnings: public sex; heat sex (so dubcon for some people?); mention of past attempted rape (not Dean/Cas)*

“Just a little pinch...” the doctor said soothingly.

Cas’ eyes went wide as he caught sight of the gauge of the needle. “Um...that’s pretty big...” Cas sucked in air through his teeth as the needle went in with a sharp pinch, he felt pressure, and then the needle was out and the doctor was placing gauze over the entry point.

“Hold that please.”

Castiel held the gauze in place and watched the doctor dispose of the needle in a little red box. He turned back to him with a smile.

“That wasn’t so bad, was it?”

Castiel shook his head, but his arm was kind of throbbing where the needle had gone in.

“The part that will hurt will be when it comes out,” the doctor said cheerfully.

Cas made a face of dismay and the doctor chuckled.

“Relax. It won’t be that bad.”

He turned away again to write something in his chart and Cas pulled the gauze back to peek at the puncture. It had stopped bleeding, so he raised a finger and probed gently along the underside of his bicep. He made another face as he felt the inch and half long implant in his arm, already releasing small levels of hormones to suppress his heats and prevent pregnancy.

“So. Do you have any questions for me?” the doctor asked.

“When will it start to work?” Cas asked.

“Right away. But, to be on the safe side, we recommend you not having unprotected sex for twenty-four hours.”

“Not a problem,” Cas mumbled, half in self-deprecating humor. “When will I start noticing side effects, if I have any?”

“Probably not for a few days. Except for your sense of smell. That will happen right away. Things might smell a little differently to you—things you once liked might not be as pleasant as they used to be. Other smells may be stronger, sharper. But, that may not even happen. Thirty percent of Omegas and ninety-five percent of Betas say they detect no noticeable changes.”

“But if I do, you said that won’t affect my ability to detect a compatible mate.”

“Oh, no, not in the slightest. That is hardwired into your system and a change in hormones won’t affect that.”

“And, you said the birth control kicks in right away, but what about suppressing my heats?”

“That should be immediate as well. Especially since you said you’re still a few weeks away from your next anticipated heat, correct?”

Cas nodded.

“Then you should pass through that time exactly like you will all future heats. Now remember, this doesn’t act as a full suppressant. Those can be dangerous and that’s why I recommended you try to the O-Calor implant. However, since it doesn’t fully suppress the heat you will find that when you normally would have gone into heat that you’ll...um...be...more than usual you’ll feel...um...”

“Horny?” Cas supplied.

The doctor smiled. “Not the medical terminology I was looking for, but yes. You’ll have an increased libido, but it will not be a heat and it won’t feel like one. It won’t smell like one either.”

Cas sighed quietly in relief. That's what he needed to hear. Things had really changed with the civil rights movement of the 60's, and Omegas and Betas and Alphas all shared the same social status, with a few lingering prejudices here and there, but in general life was fair and Omegas were no longer treated like property. But civilization couldn't control animal instinct and Omegas were still in danger if they went into heat in public.

Cas had never had a problem before, always keeping careful track of his heat cycles, but shortly after he'd turned thirty his cycle had changed without warning. He'd been caught in the throes of a full heat in the offices of the real estate company he worked for. He was the only Omega working that day and the Beta who answered phones had stepped out for lunch. Cas had barely managed to make it out of the office and lock himself into his car without getting raped by the three Alphas he considered friends and colleagues.

He'd cowered in the backseat of his Accord as he'd called 911 and the three Alphas had prowled around his car, yanking on the handles and pounding on the roof and hood. Fortunately with his scent cut off from them by way of being in the car, they had calmed slightly and weren't outright charging the car or thinking about breaking the glass to get to him. Two Beta police officers had arrived on the scene and escorted him home where he'd had to indulge in his box of toys. Only, of course, after embarrassing himself by asking the two Beta officers if they wanted to stick around and fuck him.

Worst of all though, was returning to work a week later and sitting in a room with his three Alpha coworkers while they apologized profusely for their behavior. Cas had tried to apologize to them for not recognizing the signs of his oncoming heat and putting them in that position. It had been awkward for weeks after that. In fact, one of the Alphas had resigned and found a job with a different agency. It had been a year since then—a year of Cas taking suppressants so that something like that would never happen again—and things had finally become normal among them all again.

Unfortunately the suppressants had made Cas feel irritable and fatigued and made his joints ache. That's when Doctor Johnson had suggested he give the O-Calor implant a try. It would eradicate all signs of a heat, but not adversely affect his health or moods. The doctor swore by it as he used one himself.

"I know the implant is supposed to be good for three years," Cas said and the doctor nodded confirmation, "but will it start to wear off once it approaches three years? Is it possible that the hormone levels will taper off so much that I could start having heats again?"

The doctor shook his head. "The implant is technically good for five years. But, we recommend having it replaced every three just to be on the safe side."

Castiel nodded. He twisted his hands. "So...my heats are...gone?"

"Until you take the implant out. Or...if you happen to run across your 'true mate,' then his or her scent will override the hormones from the implant. But, even for an Omega not on suppressants or anything else, coming across one's 'true mate' will trigger a heat. Of course the odds of anyone coming across their 'true mate' in this day and age is highly unlikely. With the large population and migration patterns and globalization—we've become too scattered as a species for that to ever really be a statistical possibility."

Cas smiled. "Sure does happen in the movies a lot, though, doesn't it?"

The doctor laughed. "That is it does. Have you seen the *Dark Rainbow* trilogy movies? I just love that Jason Vackles. He's such an...*Alpha*. Isn't he?"

“I heard he’s really a Beta,” Cas said dryly.

“Well. He sure does *play* Alpha convincingly.”

Cas shrugged a shoulder. He thought it was pretty obvious the actor was neither quite one nor the other.

“Okay, you’re all set then. Keep track of your scents and see if you notice a difference. Let me know if you experience any side effects, even minor ones. Otherwise, we’re good until your next annual checkup.”

Cas hopped off the table. He shook the doctor’s hand. “Thank you, Dr. Johnson.”

“You’re welcome, Castiel. I hope this not only gives you an extra week every three months that you don’t have to stay indoors, but it gives you some peace of mind too.”

Cas smiled and nodded and took his leave. As he was checking out at the reception desk, he was pleased to see that he’d only been in there for fifteen minutes. He would have plenty of time to grab lunch before he needed to be in Old Town for the open house he was hosting.

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Cas straightened the already perfectly placed information packets on the kitchen island one more time. It was fifteen minutes past the start time for the open house, but he wasn’t worried. Not yet anyway. He knew people would come. This place was a steal. It was a three bedroom townhouse set on the end of a group of four. It had been gutted by the previous owner and updated with all modern appliances and stylish furnishings and decorations. It was close to shopping and a subway station, but was distanced from the loud clamor of the city. It even had an attached one car garage. It was on sale for a criminally low price because the owner had to unload it as quickly as possible so that he could afford to pay his mortgage on a new house three states away after being transferred for work. This place was a steal! So where was everyone, dammit?

The timer on the stove buzzed softly and Cas pulled on an oven mitt so he could take out the chocolate chip cookies he’d been baking. Cas scented something warm and delicious in the air. Which was a little odd since he hadn’t opened the oven yet. As soon as he did he was awash with the scent of baking and melted chocolate. It smelled incredible. He frowned as he put the tray down on the stove and turned off the oven. If he didn’t have heats anymore, did that mean he no longer had an excuse for going on a chocolate and fat diet once every three months?

“Hello?”

Castiel turned at the sound of male voice. The man entered the kitchen and even over the smell of cookies, Cas could tell that the first thing he’d smelled—that warm, rich scent—had come from this man. He was very tall and quite handsome and so clearly an Alpha. He wore his dark hair in a sleek spill of locks to just below his ears and had cool hazel eyes. His smile was like a thousand watt bulb and Cas eagerly drew closer to him.

“Hi. My name is Castiel Novak. You’re here for the open house?”

“I am. My name’s Sam.”

They shook hands and Cas tilted his head just slightly. It seemed like the scent was coming more from the man’s clothes than his skin.

“Well, Sam, feel free to look and poke around all you like. I’m here if you have any questions.

Take one of these information packets with you. It has the square footage, age of the house, recent upgrades, and other pertinent information such as which furniture comes with the house.”

Cas allowed his fingers to graze Sam’s as he passed him the packet. Sam accepted it with a smile and no other reaction. Cas deflated. Well. Even if he wasn’t giving off a reciprocal smell of Yummy Omega, it wasn’t like he was ugly or anything.

“So, I’ll do a quick walkthrough, but I need to wait for my brother. We just moved into town and we’re looking for a place that will...accommodate two Alphas.”

Cas nodded. It wasn’t uncommon for unmated siblings, especially Alphas, to live together well into their twenties or even thirties. Sam looked like he might be somewhere on the cusp of those two decades.

“Well, then this might work pretty well for you. There are two bedrooms and a full bath upstairs, but the third bedroom is actually on the lower level with a full bath of its own. It’s a good way to have privacy, but still have a common area to share.”

“Oh, that sounds great. Mind if I grab a cookie?”

“Please,” Cas said stepping aside and letting Sam brush past him. He leaned forward discreetly and took a sniff. There was that scent. It was so good. But, it really did seem like it was diluted somehow. Cas wondered if the implant was already affecting him and he now found the smell of cotton to be enticing.

The doorbell sounded and Castiel excused himself to greet a young couple at the door. He invited them inside, plied them with cookies and information packets, and then was rushing off to greet more guests. Within twenty minutes there were several people viewing the townhouse and half the information packets were gone. Castiel could already smell his commission.

“Mr. Novak?”

“Please, call me Cas,” Cas said to the young couple that had arrived after Sam. “Can I do something for you?”

“I was wondering if you could show us the access to the attic.”

“Oh, of course, come this way.”

Cas talked about other charms of the house as he made his way up the three-turn staircase. He walked to the end of the hall and pulled down on the cord that hung from a panel in the ceiling. The opening revealed the pink interior of the insulated attic and a retractable ladder.

“Can I go up?” the man asked.

“Of course.”

“I’ll stay here,” the woman said firmly.

Cas smiled at her, and then followed the man up the ladder. He paused just before sticking his head inside. He smelled something—something...delicious. Had he left another batch of cookies in the oven? No, he’d only made the one. And the scent wasn’t sweet...it was...spicy. Delicious. He shook his head. Maybe someone was wearing perfume. He climbed up into the tiny space and watched the young man poke around the insulation and the corners of the slanting interior of the roof.

Cas was usually all for someone being able to explore a house fully so that they felt confident making an offer, but this guy sure was taking his sweet time. The attic was packed with insulation and had zero air conditioning. It was stuffy and Cas was feeling hot. He felt sweat gather on his upper lip. He shifted uncomfortably and tried to keep his breathing even. He pulled on the collar of his suit, trying to discreetly loosen his tie.

“Do you have any concerns?” Cas finally asked when the man was just standing there and looking around.

“No, no, it looks great. I’m glad there’s a floor so we can use it for storage.”

“Yes, that is one of the features. Do you want to discuss more back on the main floor? There’s an air conditioning vent right beside the opening and...”

“Oh, yes, of course.”

Cas turned and began walking down the ladder. The coolness of the air conditioned hallway was a relief. However, after the man had climbed down safely, Cas noticed that as he closed the opening to the attic, he still felt warm. Very warm. He considered taking off his suit jacket, but he was worried he had pit stains now. Plus, he was certain he would cool down if he just stood still in the a/c for a moment.

Cas shifted from foot to foot as he tried to concentrate on the couple’s questions, but there was still that spicy scent in the air. And it was stronger now. Someone wouldn’t have started burning incense in a home they didn’t own yet, would they? Even if they were, it wasn’t like any incense Cas had ever smelled. It was making him salivate. It was making him feel like...like he wished he could shut the man’s incessant questions by shoving his dick in his mouth.

Cas blinked. That thought had come out of nowhere. And why had it seemed so appealing? He hadn’t had sex in a little while, but it hadn’t been so long that he would be having weird sexual fantasies about a man he wasn’t even attracted to. Cas stopped mid-sentence in his explanation of what the HOA fees covered when he got a stronger waft of that scent.

“I’m sorry,” he said, “do you smell incense burning, or...”

The couple shared a look and then shrugged at Cas.

“I don’t smell anything,” the woman said.

“Ah.” As that spiciness made his head spin a little, Cas shivered despite the fact that he was still hot and sweating even more than he had been in the attic. He knew what the animal part of his brain was telling him, but he told that part to shut up because he had just gotten an implant to stop this kind of shit, goddammit.

“Well, why don’t I leave you two to wander around a bit more?”

Without waiting for an answer, Cas turned and walked quickly down the hall to the stairs. He just needed to go in his car and blast the a/c and call Dr. Johnson and tell him the implant was having an adverse effect on him. No problem at all. His car was in the garage, all he had to do was make it past the kitchen and then go down one more flight of stairs...

“Castiel!”

Cas stopped dead in his tracks, and then turned horror-movie slow to look at Sam. He was petrified that Sam and his stupid plaid cotton shirt had triggered some weird reaction in him due to the implant. He didn’t have time to talk. Why had he stopped?

“Sam, hi.”

“Yeah, so my brother finally made it. Can you show us the garage? He wants to know if his car will fit in it.”

Sam stepped to the side and revealed his brother leaning against the kitchen island, hoarding three cookies in his hand while he chowed down on a fourth. And suddenly it all made sense. Cas hadn't been smelling Sam, he'd been smelling his brother's scent on his clothes. Maybe they shared clothes or lived in close quarters. Heck, maybe the brothers just hugged a lot. But that scent he'd smelled on Sam—that had been from Sam's brother, Castiel's Alpha. He took one step forward, and as soon as he did slick rushed out of his hole and he knew two things: he was in full heat and his pants were ruined.

Everyone nearby smelled it immediately. Even the Betas in the room were looking at him. Cas noticed that Sam's pupils had dilated and probably so did every other Alpha's in the house as well. *His* Alpha swallowed the bite of cookie in his mouth and dropped the other three onto the island. He crossed the room in three large steps, grabbed Cas by the lapels, and dragged him in for a kiss. Cas already had his arms locked around the man's back and hitched one leg up on his hip so that he could grind against his thigh.

Cas could smell a slight change in his Alpha's scent. It didn't detract at all from what he was feeling, but he could sense the other Alphas were standing down. Often times an aroused Alpha's scent mixed with the smell of an unmated Omega, especially one in heat, could incite violence and even a fight to the death. Whatever it was that Dean was exuding now, something triggered by finding his *true mate*, it calmed the other Alphas and even made them somewhat submissive as they bowed their heads and backed away from the apparent imminent mating.

As his Alpha lifted him up and carried him to the kitchen island, Cas could see that most people were scooting out the door as stealthily as possible. His Alpha's brother was backing up too.

“So, uh...I guess I'll come back and see how things are going in a couple of hours.”

His Alpha grunted a response and swiped the remaining information packets onto the floor with a hand. He set Cas roughly on the counter top and immediately began tearing open his fly and yanking at his belt. Cas gasped as his pants and boxers were down to his ankles before Sam had even managed to finish backing out of the room.

Then his Alpha was pushing his legs straight up by the back of his thighs, and burying his face in the warm wetness between his legs. Cas let out an uninhibited moan and gripped the sides of the island as more slick rushed out of him to meet his Alpha's tongue. Cas squirmed desperately as his Alpha lapped at his hole, causing his slick to continue pour out of him at an alarming rate. He was panting heavily and could feel his hole clenching down on his Alphas' tongue every time it slipped inside of him. That was great and felt nice, but they had time for it later. He needed his Alpha's knot. Like ten minutes ago.

“Hi, hi, sorry to disturb.”

Dean raised his head and a low growl trickled out of his mouth. The Beta had his hands in the air as a sign of nonaggression and leaned down to pick up one of the information packets.

“Sorry, just needed to grab one of these.”

Cas rolled his hips, trying to get his Alpha's attention again.

“Alpha,” he whined. He would have felt stupid for resorting to the porn cliché, but he didn't

know his name.

His Alpha kept his eyes on the man as he brazenly walked two feet farther into the kitchen to grab one of the remaining cookies off the baking tray. Then he backed up, apologizing again, and left the room. Moments later they heard the door shut firmly behind him. Cas looked back at his Alpha was about to ask him for his name when the man shoved three fingers into him. Cas screamed and arched his back. When he opened his eyes, his chest was heaving and his feet were up on the counter—shoes, socks, pants, and boxers all mysteriously gone now. His bare feet were brace on the edge and allowed him to spread his legs wide for his Alpha. The man was smiling at him as he licked Cas' slick off his fingers one at a time.

“Never tasted heat slick before,” he said, his voice deep and rough and making Cas writhe impatiently as more slick spilled out of him. “Never tasted anything like *you* before, pretty.”

“Feel better than I taste,” Cas said invitingly.

“I doubt it,” his Alpha chuckled, but he was pulling on the buckle of his belt and opening the fly of his jeans. Fucking finally.

Cas bit his lip and raised his head so he could see it. The smell in the room intensified as Dean's sex was released. Cas dropped his head back and felt a wash of something that felt suspiciously like an orgasm roll over his body. His cock was straining, his hole was throbbing.

“Al-alpha, please.”

“Hang on, baby. I gotcha.”

Cas let out a long, desperate whimper when he felt his Alpha's cockhead enter his body for the first time. He almost started crying as he pushed inside inch by inch by inch...shit how many inches were there? Then he felt his Alpha's balls, tight and heavy, snugged up against his ass. His Alpha was completely inside him, and he was *huge*. He was scalding hot. Cas was trembling with the effort that it took to hold still and not propel himself off the island, push the man to the floor, and ride him like a little Alpha bitch. That was a fantasy for another time.

“Come on, then,” Cas challenged. “You don't have anything yet.”

His Alpha's hands clamped around his hips like a vice. Cas sucked in a breath of eager anticipation. Then he lost most of his ability for cognitive functioning as his Alpha fucked him with a fearsome wildness that had every thrust resulting in a mind-shattering explosion of pleasure across every nerve ending in his body. No matter how wet and open he was, his Alpha was so big that every stroke felt like he was losing his virginity all over again with how tight the stretch made him. Just underneath the sounds of Cas' low moaning whine and his Alpha's rough grunts, was the obscene squelching noise of his copious slick being fucked out of him by his Alpha's dick.

Cas knew he was a dozen thrusts or so away from coming when he felt his Alpha's knot begin to tug on his rim. The feeling made Cas instinctively shove his hips back against the man's, needing him to knot him immediately. Come inside him and stay tied to him while he shot dozens of loads of hot Alpha come into his hole. But he pulled himself together enough to push lightly on his Alpha's shoulder.

“D-d-don't kn-knot me-me f-f-for—” Cas couldn't even get the words out; the man was pounding into him so hard his voice shook.

Fortunately being true mates meant they must have been on the same wavelength because his

Alpha pulled out completely, drawing a snarl from both of them. Then the man grabbed Cas' arm and yanked him off the counter. He pushed the suit coat off his shoulders and then spun Cas around. Cas braced his hands against the island and smiled as he felt his Alpha slide his hands on his bare skin, underneath his shirt and up to his nipples. Then he entered him again, his knot just barely fitting inside with a pleasurable painful pop. His Alpha thrust forward with short, desperate movements while his large hands kneaded Cas' chest, his thumbs and index fingers occasionally rolling his nipples. Cas reached up and back and grasped at the leather collar of the man's jacket. Then he just held on as his Alpha grinded against him, his body jerking with the effort to stave off his orgasm long enough to make sure his knot had completely swelled.

Then the man dropped one hand down and grabbed Cas' cock. He gasped and arched his back, pulling on the man's knot. His Alpha groaned loudly and buried his teeth high up on his shoulder, almost on his neck as it was the only skin he could reach because of Cas' shirt. His teeth didn't break the skin though—it wasn't a claiming bite, *yet*. Cas barely noticed the pain on his shoulder as he was jacked roughly to a mind-numbing completion. The Omegas and Betas he'd been with had always made sure Cas' cock got a little attention too, but it never seemed to cross an Alpha's mind that a male Omega still had a very much functioning penis. But his Alpha did. God, his Alpha was perfect.

Cas could feel the smile on his face as he spurted come all over his Alpha's hand—and the hardwood floors. That would be a bitch to clean up later. Then the man's hand spread flat across his abdomen and Cas let himself be bent forward a little more. Then his Alpha was locked inside him and coming in hot, thick bursts inside him. He could feel it. He could feel himself being marked. Being bred. The Alpha snapped his hips forward as best he could once last time, pulling Cas back possessively with his grip on his abdomen. He let out a low moan that was part growl and then bit down on Cas' neck as the biggest burst of his Alpha's seed yet flooded his hole.

Cas screamed as he orgasmed again with the punch of endorphins that resulted from his Alpha breaking the skin and creating a claiming bite as his saliva mixed into his blood. He could hear the man's own scream muffled by his shoulder. They shuddered together for several moments as the changes they were experiencing altered their very chemical and biological makeup to bind them closer together.

"Fuck," Cas whispered.

"You're telling me," his Alpha responded, sounding winded. "Got any place we can, um, lie down for a while?"

"Couch. Living room."

His Alpha picked him up around the waist and under one leg and carried him somewhat awkwardly, but effortlessly, into the living room. He sat down in the middle of the couch and then maneuvered them gently until they were lying on their sides, pressed together. Cas was right on the edge, so he squirmed back against the man and he let out a hiss as his hand clutched Cas' hip. Another pulse of come warmed Cas' insides. He sighed happily.

They lay in silence for quite some time, just letting their fingers traipse along whatever skin they could reach of the other, which in Cas' case wasn't much since his Alpha was still fully clothed. But it was peaceful and comforting and Cas felt so at home. One of his Alpha's hands was rubbing affectionately over his hip, while the other played with Cas' fingers where their arms hung off the side of the couch. He occasionally flicked his tongue over the tender bite wound on Cas' neck, soothing the mild pain that had resulted from their mating.

"So, uh," the man started, and then cleared his throat. "My brother said your name was Cas-steel...?"

“Castiel,” he said with a soft smile. “But I go by Cas.”

“Cas,” the man said, and Cas closed his eyes and shivered at hearing his name fall from his Alpha’s lips.

He licked his lips and settled his breathing, and then he asked, “And you are?”

“Dean.”

“Dean. *Dean*. Good to know. I want to scream it next time.”

Dean buried his face in the back of Cas’ neck and moaned softly. He raised his head, gave Cas’ claiming bite a couple of loving licks, and then settled his chin on his shoulder.

“I feel like I should be freaked out that I just mated and claimed some dude I actually hadn’t even met yet when I did, but...I swear this just feels so right.”

“True mates,” Cas murmured. “Not just a fairy tale then.”

“No, I guess not.”

“Hm. It is all very romantic. But I do hope you’re not an asshole.”

“Hey!” Dean lightly slapped his hip and Cas chuckled. “Although...I kind of can be an asshole.”

“At least you’re honest and have no self-delusions.”

“Um...well...”

Cas did his best to look back over his shoulder at him. Dean gave him a sheepish smile.

“We’re going to have to have a long talk about what my brother and I do for a living.”

Cas sighed. “Am I going to wind up being the Bonnie to your Clyde?” he asked teasingly.

“No, of course not. Well...not exactly.”

Cas tried once more to look at him over his shoulder. Dean kissed him on the temple.

“Let’s talk about it when we can talk face to face.”

“That’s really reassuring.”

Dean kissed the back of his neck. “Relax, pretty, I promise I’ll always keep you safe.”

Cas relaxed into his arms. He believed him. And really, how bad could it be? Dean was just probably being melodramatic.

“So, what should we talk about then for the next forty to sixty minutes?” Cas asked.

“Um...did you do anything interesting today?”

“Well, I got up early to go to yoga class.”

“So you’re bendy. That’s excellent.”

Cas could feel Dean’s grin against his skin and had to smile too.

“Then I went to Starbucks because the Pumpkin Spice Lattes are back early this year.”

“Frou-frou drinks, okay. I think I’m starting to paint a picture here.”

Cas nudged him with his elbow. “Let’s see, oh, yes, then I went to my doctor to have an O-Calor implant inserted.

“Um...a what?”

“It’s a small metal implant they put in the arm that releases low doses of hormones as a form of birth control and to suppress heats. Even with insurance it costs a thousand dollars, but it’s supposed to last about three years. Unless, of course, in the unlikely event I were to run into my true mate and he triggered a heat.”

He could hear Dean’s soft snuffling laugh just behind his ear, his warm breath coursing down his neck and making him shiver in a very pleasant way.

“Three years, huh? And you got about how much use out of it?”

“Oh, I’d say about three hours.”

Dean laughed and wrapped his arms around Cas. “You know what?”

“What?”

“I’m not even sorry.”

Cas grinned. “And I’ve never been so happy to throw a thousand dollars down the drain.”

Hate to Love

Hate to Love

1. Natural Enemies - Destiel - Explicit
2. Mortal Enemies - Destiel - Mature (Explicit?)
3. Clashing Personalities - Cockles - Teen

1. Natural Enemies: Destiel – Explicit

Warnings: total crack fic; demon species!Dean; winged angel!Cas; OOC-ness; self-lubrication; dubcon in the sense that Cas is saying “no” but...he really wants it (so, rape culture, but seriously--this is a total crack fic completely disconnected from reality)

“Masters?”

“Here, sir,” two voices replied, one clear and one smoky.

The blonde and brunette glared at each other.

“Garnet?”

“Here, sir,” two voices replied, one annoyed and the other cocky.

The blonde and the brunette glared at each other.

“First?”

“Here, sir,” two voices replied, one youthful and one smugly British.

The blonde and the brunette smirked at each other.

“Winchester?”

“Here, sir,” one voice replied, the brunette sounding nervous.

Alistair looked up from his call list. “Winchester? Dean Winchester?”

“Here, here! I’m here!”

Dean slid down the chain that was holding several souls over a pit of burning damnation. They moaned as the movement aggravated their contorted and abused limbs. Dean ran across the obsidian floor and skidded to a halt in front of his mentor. Alistair tucked his clipboard under his arm and glared at the young demon. Sam elbowed him hard and Dean remembered to drop his head and look contrite and obedient.

“Dean, stay put. The rest of you, go see Abaddon for your assignments.”

The other demons threw looks of contempt and gleeful amusement at the kind of blondish demon who was surely going to receive another excruciating punishment. He just hadn't come out right, that one.

"You too, Sam," Alistair said.

Sam glanced at his brother and then trudged slowly after the others, his pointed tail drooping between his legs.

"Winchester," Alistair said in his oddly accented voice, "you are nothing but a disappointment."

"I'm sorry, sir. I'm late because I was—"

"Helping an old lady across a lava bed? Putting the wings back on a fly?"

Dean frowned. "No, of course not."

"Winchester, you and your companions are going out on a Corruption Mission today. I expect you to turn no less than three souls. And none of those can be ones that are already on their way to hell like serial killers and rapists. I want three pure souls: corrupted so badly they can't be saved or willing to make a deal with one of the Crossroads going with you."

Dean straightened and squared his shoulders. "Three? That's nothing. I can corrupt ten."

"Let's start with three. You concern me, Winchester...you...have too much light in your heart."

Dean gawked. "Me? Light? Sir, my soul is the blackest pit of evil that there ever was."

"Is that so? Seems to me that if your brother burned his hand while torturing a soul on the rack a good demon, a *proper* demon, would have laughed or burned him worse. Not pat his head and bandage the wound."

Dean's shoulders slumped. "I would have burned one of the Masters. He's my brother. You make us in pairs for a reason, right?"

"I do. But it's not to make sissy pants out of you."

Dean dropped his eyes to the floor and scuffed his toe on the smooth, black floor. His tail flicked around in displeasure behind him. Alistair grabbed one of his shiny black horns and pulled Dean forward.

"Three souls, Winchester. Make me proud. Or I'll make you...no, I'll make your brother suffer."

Dean's eyes went wide. "I promise, sir! I'll corrupt a saint if I have to."

Alistair sighed and released him. "You're supposed to say, 'So? What do I care what happens to that snot-nosed rival of mine?'"

"Oh." Dean gave Alistair a forced smile. "Um, so? What do I—"

"Just go," Alistair said, rubbing his forehead and pointing toward the others with his clipboard.

Dean scampered away, his bare feet slapping loudly on the hard floor. He kept his eyes down when he greeted Abaddon with a proper insult. She handed him a list with three names on it. He didn't recognize any names on the list; he'd half been expecting to see the Pope himself. Abaddon smacked him on the side of the head and he hurried over to join the others in the sigil

painted on the floor that would transfer them to the human world. Sam looked at him apologetically. Dean knew he should sneer at the kid and slap him, but he settled for just looking away from him.

Plain black clothes materialized on the demons as they made topside. Abaddon's voice floated from the fading spellwork, informing them all that Crowley the First (who was technically second of the First, which drove Lilith mad) was in charge. They had three days to complete their missions, and then they were to report back to the same spot for transportation back to Hell.

They had been dropped off in a Fae forest, which wasn't really the human world so much as it was human adjacent. But it was safer making the transition into the human world when they could control where they were going by seeing where they were through the Fae world. The humans were constantly reproducing and expanding like cockroaches. It was always bad form for a group of demons to suddenly appear in the middle of a corporate meeting about the new shape of marshmallow for a children's cereal.

"Follow me," Crowley said, taking his leadership role way too seriously.

Dean rolled his eyes, but followed the group of young demons through the beautifully in bloom forest. All of the bright flowers and sweet-smelling blossoms made Dean want to puke. He watched as the Garnet girls flanked Sam. He glanced nervously between them, but Dean knew Sam had a definite preference for the brunette Ruby. The blonde Ruby was too whiny and resented the fact that her younger sister had been given the same name. The Masters had the same problem, but brunette Meg was so blasé about pretty much everything that she had no problem going by "Hey You" while her blonde sister used their given name.

Crowley made his way to the edge of the Fae forest, and the group lined up so they could look out onto the human world. Dean liked it when they went on these excursions. Not for the corrupting, that was fun and all, but he loved the food. And the movies and the music. Humans were so much more creative than demons. All demons knew how to do was come up with new torture methods.

"Okay," Crowley said, "how many of you have targets in Asia?"

A few hands went up.

"Okay, then we'll—"

"Wait!" Brunette Ruby cried out. "Do you smell that?"

"Smell what?" Lilith snapped grumpily. She really didn't like not being put in charge, but after her last mission accomplished turning ten atheists into worshippers of The Douche That Shall Not Be Named With A Capital G—she'd been demoted.

Sam tilted his head up and sniffed the air. "I smell it too. It's something—electric. Metallic."

"It's ozone," Blonde Ruby said.

"Angels," the Masters sisters said together with a gleam in their eyes.

Everyone looked at Crowley.

"Like we're not going to investigate? Let's go," their leader said.

The demons turned away from the human world and crept through the forest, trying to sort out the direction of the sharp smell of Heaven from the nearly overpowering scents of the blooming

forest. Not very far away, the group of demons crouched behind a cluster of bushes and peeked over. There they were. No less than ten angels, bathing in a warm, Fae-spelled spring. Their robes were littered haphazardly around the small pool and the angels were laughing and splashing each other. Their skin, whether light or dark, gleamed flawlessly in the swath of sunlight that broke through the thick overhead canopy. Large sleek wings of white and silver and gold were folded tightly against their backs. One redheaded angel sat perched on a stone, rubbing herself with some sort of oil. Her tits were small but bouncy. Dean sniggered and nudged his brother. Sam giggled back. Brunette Ruby shot them a look and then rolled her eyes.

“I’ve an idea,” Crowley said.

The demons huddled up and listened to Crowley’s plan. They would surround the pool and leave a small gap that would be the opening the angels would use to flee when they jumped out at them. They would corral them toward the sigil through which they had come from Hell. If one toe or feather crossed the seal they would be trapped. They were bound to catch at least half of the angels. Alistair and Abaddon would be tickled pink and surely they would be given first dibs of all the new souls entering Hell next quarter.

“Be sure to grab up their robes,” Lilith said. “They can’t cross back to Heaven without them.”

“Don’t forget,” Crowley added, “we’ll jump out all at once and then taunt them for a bit before getting them to run. We need them riled up.”

The other demons nodded.

“Alright, everyone spread out,” Crowley hissed excitedly.

Dean gave Sam a smile as they made their way to the far side of the pool.

“You ever had an angel before, little brother?” Dean whispered.

Sam shook his head. “No. I hear they only pretend not to like it.”

Dean snickered. “Like or not, they are all going to have some demon in them today.”

Sam laughed and then clapped a hand over his mouth.

“Shut up!” Blonde Meg hissed.

They used hand signals to send a message around the circle so they would all know when everyone was in place. He could hear the angels still giggling and splashing. He thought he detected the faint notes of a harp being played. Dean wondered what the signal would be for them to leap out and reveal themselves.

“Now!” Crowley cried out.

Dean was a bit startled by the command himself, so he was a bit late jumping out of the bushes. But their plan had worked. They had the angels surrounded and the celestial beings were utterly shocked, their hands and wings trying to shield their bodies.

“Hello, lovelies,” Crowley said. “We have you surrounded and—”

Crowley broke off, startled and astonished, as the angels squealed and screamed and shrieked and darted out of the pool in all directions. They grabbed their robes and did go through the gap made by the demons, but one or two barreled through the Masters sisters who were making up the ends of the gaps. The demons stared at each other, shocked for a moment as the angelic squealing

started fading.

“After them!” Lilith shouted.

The demons took off after the herd.

“Winchester,” Crowley said, putting a hand to Dean’s chest. “Go that way. There’s a straggler.”

Dean’s jaw dropped. “You’re sending me after the straggler? I’m not even the youngest by half!”

“No, but you are by far the least of us. Do not disobey.”

Crowley took off after the group of whooping and cheering demons as they chased after their prey. Dean clenched his teeth but knew he was already in deep enough shit with Alistair that he couldn’t have Crowley reporting back that he had disobeyed orders. He took off in the direction Crowley had pointed, using his tail for balance as he ran bent forward so that he could scent the air.

After about fifty yards he came across a blue sash snagged on a honeysuckle bush. He took the silky material in his hand and brought it to his nose. He breathed deeply. There was the ever present bite of ozone all angels carried with them, but this one also smelled of oceans, clouds, and loneliness. Dean grinned and clenched the cloth in his hand as he took off running again. This might be a good thing. If he managed to wrangle an angel all by himself, he’d be a hero.

He came across the angel in a clearing of purple heather. He was pressed against a tree, panting, just like a good damsel in distress. His white robe had fallen off one shoulder and his slender leg was exposed where it gaped open without the sash.

“Hey, pretty,” Dean said, flashing his eyes black. “Lose something?”

The angel’s head snapped up in alarm, his brilliant blue eyes trained on the sash dangling from Dean’s fingers. Then he scowled, his eyes narrowing into slits.

“Give that back.”

Dean was a little surprised by the gruff voice. Surely he wouldn’t be getting any solos in the angelic choir. He allowed his eyes to flash green again and took a couple of steps into the clearing, holding the sash in his outstretched hand.

“You want it back?” Dean shrugged. “Come get it.”

The angel hesitated and then took a couple of tentative steps away from the tree. Dean’s grin widened as he watched the heavenly creature try to maintain his modesty by holding the robe closed, but all it accomplished was making him look like some kind of tempting seductress. Dean wiggled his fingers making the sash shimmy and glimmer in the sunlight. The angel took another cautious step forward.

Dean felt his stomach twist with anticipation. He licked his lips and just barely refrained from palming the forming erection between his legs. He’d never had an angel before, but he’d heard the stories. How angels had zero gag reflex, how their pussies felt, smelled, and tasted like warm pie. Even the male ones. Dean’s fingers clenched around the sash as his arousal made it almost impossible to hold still.

“Stop that!” the angel suddenly said. “You’ll wrinkle it.”

“Oh, no! Heaven forbid! Wrinkles!”

Dean sniggered and wadded the sash up in his hands

“I said stop that!” the angel shouted and suddenly sparks flew from his fingers.

Dean yelped and released the sash so he could suck on his tingling fingers. Dean realized now the angel must be very young. Perhaps his own age or even younger. A full grown angel could have singed all the hair off his body and left him a twitching heap on the ground. Dean shook his hand to dispel the unpleasant tingling. He glared at the angel.

“You tried to smite me!”

“N-not s-smite. Just...”

The demon leapt forward and shoved the angel backwards. He gasped and fell back on his ass in the heather blossoms, wings fluffing up into the air. Dean reached out and ripped a silver feather from the shining white mass. The wing spasmed.

“Ow! You brute!”

The angel reached around Dean and yanked on his tail. The demon yowled and jumped onto the angel. They tussled around in the heather, pulling hair and pinching arms.

“You foul beast!” the angel grunted when he got an elbow to the gut. “You look like a miscreant and you smell of sulfur!”

“I’m taking that as a compliment you ozone smelling cry baby.”

“I am not a cry baby!” the angel cried.

“Hit a nerve did I?” Dean laughed as he rolled on top of the angel, pinning his wrists to the ground. “Little baby always get picked on?”

The angel squirmed under him and shouted with indignation. Dean just giggled and enjoyed the feel of the angel’s hips rolling between his legs.

“Oh, just like that, baby,” Dean taunted. He moved a hand to pull at the edge of the angel’s robe, revealing more smooth skin and a cute, pert nipple. “Show me how you like it. I’ll spread you like warm butter and—”

Dean cut off, completely startled by the open handed slap that had stung his face. He put a hand to his smarting cheek and looked down incredulously at the angel.

“Did you just...*slap* me?”

“Well! Why does your type always have to make everything so...vulgar?”

“Um...because we’re demons?”

“So? I know ‘corruption’ is your thing,” he said with a mocking tone and using air quotes, “but resorting to...*that*...just seems so cheap. So *human*.”

Dean frowned at the insulting comparison. “Human, huh? Why does your type always act like they don’t feel anything like that at all?”

Dean sat himself fully in the angel’s lap and rolled his hips. The angel’s eyes widened.

“Why do you act like...it doesn't affect you at all?”

Dean spread his hand over the angel's chest and let his thumb flick gently over a nipple that rapidly hardened to a tight bud. The angel's face remained stoic, but his wings were quivering. Dean smiled and circled his hips down hard, driving his ass onto what he knew was a forming erection.

“Not so bad, huh?”

“N-no, it's—it's terrible. Get off me.”

His wings jerked and his feathers ruffled. Dean grinned and leaned forward, sliding his fingers into the silky, soft feathers. The angel gasped and arched his back—driving his now very hard member against Dean's ass.

“Yeah, angel,” Dean groaned. “I knew you had in you. Gonna have me in you soon, too,” he chuckled. “Can't wait to taste that cherry pie between your legs.”

The angel opened his eyes, the fog of lust clearing slightly. “I don't have any pastries between my legs, demon.”

Dean groaned softly in annoyance. “Don't be so literal. I'm talking about your sweet, wet pussy.”

“I'm a male angel. I don't have a...a...*pussy*,” he whispered like he was afraid to say the word out loud. And wasn't that cute.

“No?”

Dean slid back and parted the robe. The angel squeaked and tried to draw the garment closed again, but Dean got his hands on his thighs and pushed them apart. The angel made a soft mewling sound as he was exposed to the demon and his stiff cock waved at them both.

“What's this then?” Dean asked, slipping a hand between the angel's legs. He reached behind his balls, his fingers immediately becoming slippery with the warm, sweet-smelling slick spilling out of the angel's hole.

The angel writhed against him, panting in shock. “I don't know! I don't—oh. Do that again!”

The demon grinned and obliged, rubbing his fingers over the slick pucker of muscle. He probed the entrance with his thumb.

“Oh, oh! That's, that's—!”

“That's right, angel cakes. That's your pussy. And I'm gonna eat me some.”

Dean settled between the angel's legs, spreading them wide and lifting his hips. He dipped his head down and swiped his tongue over the glistening trail of slick running over his balls. The angel yelped and twisted violently in his grasp, but Dean only held on tighter. He dove in with gusto as the sweet tang of the angel hit his tongue. He buried his face between his legs and lapped and licked and laved at his hole, gulping down all the slick that poured of his cute little angel. The angel's squealing got louder—and then suddenly he went rigid and Dean felt something warm land on his back.

He sat up and looked down at the angel—completely sated with orgasm, eyes glassy and unseeing.

“Are you kidding me?” Dean asked with annoyance. “I didn’t even get to fuck you!”

“Go ahead,” the angel purred. “Who’s stopping you?” he murmured pleasantly. He reached out and gave the demon’s tail a gentle tug. Dean hissed and moved his hand to his groin, cupping his throbbing erection. The angel continued to pull on his tail in a hard, massaging motion and the demon let out a noise of surprise and fell forward to one hand as he came in his pants.

“Shit.”

The angel kept pulling on his tail.

“Stop, stop! I can’t!”

“Feels good, little demon? We angels heard your tails are like sweet lollipops. Taste good too.”

Dean shivered at the thought of those lips sucking on his tail. He gave the angel a heated look and flicked his tail forward, the thick, pyramidal tip hovering over his lips.

“Go ahead.”

The angel raised his head and licked at the tail tentatively. Then he moaned and grabbed onto it, sucking the head into his mouth. Dean cried out and bucked his hips forward, falling onto the angel and tangling their thighs. They rubbed their groins together and Dean slid his fingers in the feathers of the angel’s wings again. The angel let out a wild sound that was muffled by the tail in his mouth. He sucked harder and the demon gripped the wings tighter. Their hips worked frantically, movements eased by the angel’s slick between his thighs. They both came again at the same time, pushing the other away from their oversensitive appendages and screaming loud enough for anyone in the Fae world to hear them. Then they fell into a panting, sated mess, hidden in the tall heather.

When he caught his breath Dean sat up, bracing himself on the ground with one hand. His face was very close to the angel, and he looked at his plump, pink lips and wanted to kiss him. But that wasn’t a very demon-y thing to do. He was about to pull away when the angel caught him behind the neck and pulled him down for a kiss anyway. It was gentle and a little clumsy, but nice. Not the way a demon should kiss at all. He pulled back and looked at the smiling angel. He scowled.

“Why are you smiling?”

The angel shrugged. “What’s your name?”

Dean’s mouth opened, a scathing insult on the tip of his tongue, but those blue eyes just looked at him like they were seeing *him*—and not what he was *supposed* to be.

“D-Dean. M’name’s Dean.”

“Dean. Hello. My name is Castiel.”

“Castiel. Weird fuckin’ name.”

Castiel pinched his arm. “Be nice.”

“Be nice?” Dean snorted. He rolled off the angel and lay on his side, head propped up with his hand. “I’m a demon, Cas. We don’t *do* nice.”

“I don’t know. I think what we just did was nice.”

“That wasn’t—” Dean felt himself blush and couldn’t believe it. Demons didn’t *blush*.

Castiel put one hand underneath his head and reached up with the other to brush the backs of his fingers over the demon’s cheek.

“Why do you terrorize humans?”

Dean frowned and shrugged. “We just do.”

“Do you like doing it?”

Dean knew what *should* be the answer to that question, but he deflected with, “Why do you like to judge and punish humans?”

The angel sighed. “I don’t. I like humans. I like their world. It’s interesting. And creative.”

Dean nodded, suddenly excited. “I know, right? They have music and food and they make rules but they know when to break them!”

The angel smiled beatifically at him. “Your eyes are so pretty right now. All bright and green.”

Dean scowled. “Shut up.”

Castiel reached up with a hand and fondled one of Dean’s horns...and that totally did not feel good at all.

“Can you hide these?”

“Huh?”

“Are you able to hide your horns? And your tail?”

“Well, yeah, it’s how we walk amongst the humans to corrupt them.”

“Hmm.”

“Why? What are you thinking?”

“I can hide my wings.”

“You can?”

“Yes. So, we can both pass for human.”

Dean let out a small disbelieving laugh. “Are you really suggesting what I think you’re suggesting?”

The angel snatched his hand back and looked self-conscious. “I’m not suggesting anything.”

“Oh.” Dean leaned close and gave a light flick of his tongue across the angel’s lips. “That’s a shame. Because if you had suggested something...I might be on board with it.”

Castiel relaxed a little and parted his lips. “Well, if you’re on board with it...I might be suggesting it.”

The demon smiled, and then kissed his angel.

“Sounds like we got ourselves a pretty wishy-washy plan.”

Castiel laughed. “Still better than any angelic plans my superiors had for me.”

“Same here.”

Castiel reached out for Dean’s hand and they threaded their fingers together, which Dean thought was totally sappy and not cute at all.

“So, what, we’re just going to go to the human world, and do what?” Dean asked.

Castiel shrugged. “We’ll make it up as we go.”

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“Hurry up, Dean, or we’ll be late,” Castiel said impatiently as he tapped a foot in the doorway.

“We got plenty of time. Relax.” He created a couple more artful spikes with his hair and then turned to face Castiel. “Okay, I’m ready.”

“Really?” Castiel asked with a quirked eyebrow.

“What?” Dean asked defensively.

“Forgetting something?” Castiel asked as he reached behind Dean and grabbed his tail. He wagged the point in front of Dean’s face.

Dean grumbled and concentrated on storing his tail away in the ether.

“It’s your fault,” he muttered. “Always want it out to play with it.”

“I want it out?” Castiel laughed and locked their apartment door behind them. “First thing I see when I get home at night is your tail in my face and you rubbing against my leg like a cat in heat.”

“Fuck you, birdbrain. Why don’t you explain to me why our bedroom is constantly littered with feathers?”

Castiel laughed and linked his arm with Dean’s. He leaned against him as they stepped onto the elevator.

“Because I come harder when you use your grip on my wings to fuck me from behind,” he whispered into his ear.

Dean shivered. “Ca~~s,” he whined softly. “Not now.”

The two of them managed to behave themselves as they made their way to the café a few blocks from their building. They arrived ten minutes early because Castiel had told Dean they were scheduled to meet thirty minutes before the actual time. The angel smiled as he sipped his Earl Grey and listened to Dean talk about the new LP he’d found in a thrift store. He always looked so cute when he got excited about his music. Then he glanced over Dean’s shoulder.

“Oh! There they are!”

Dean turned to look.

Walking down the street was a tall gangly kid and short man with a lot of swagger. Dean’s face broke into a grin. He hopped out of his chair and started for the pair.



“Sammy!” he called out.

Castiel followed behind more sedately and smiled at his big brother when he reached him, tuning out the excited shouts of his demon lover and his sibling.

“Hey, kiddo,” Gabriel said, giving his hair a good tousle. “Looks like going human has treated you well.”

Castiel smiled and glanced at Dean. The demon paused in giving his brother a noogie and smiled back at him.

“We’ve done alright for ourselves,” Castiel agreed.

## **2. Mortal Enemies: Destiel – Mature (Explicit?)**

*Warnings: angry sex; barebacking; kind of cracky; weird dialogue; longish; mild violence*

Sam Winchester was a good kid. He got excellent grades and was the politest fourteen year old boy anyone had ever met. He was considerate and kind and had a sense of humor and a well-developed sense of justice. He was a good kid. Except when his father told him “no.” Then he became ornery and rebellious and disgruntled that the often absent man tried to impose his will on Sam, his brother, and mother. The man had no right to control them, but he already had their lives mapped out for them. Sam and Dean were going to take over the family business as town Lawmen, whether they wanted to or not. John and Mary Winchester’s places as representatives on the town Council made them think their children could never do or be anything else.

That philosophy was shared by all the Council members—who always sat in family pairs whether by marriage or blood. The Winchesters represented Justice, the Harvelles oversaw Production, the Crowleys managed Trade, the Lafittes organized Defense, and the Engels were the Governors. Perhaps that was how the feud between the Winchesters and the Engels started—politicians often clashed with law enforcers. It seemed that a lot of arguments stemmed from John claiming the Engels were corrupt and took bribes left and right, but mostly Winchesters were taught that Engels were just depraved and obnoxious and their absolute mortal enemies.

That was why Sam was standing outside the gates to the Engel manner in a group of his friends, dressed all in black, wearing a black bandanna to hide his hair, and a silver mask covering the upper portion of his face. Everyone was dressed the same, even the girls. The Engels’ masquerade ball was legendary, but nary had a Winchester ever set foot within the gated estate. Sam was there because he knew his father would be furious when he found out. He grinned as he was pulled inside by a girl about his age. He didn’t recognize her, and only knew she was a girl based on the curve of her hips underneath her black shirt. He laughed and followed her inside—the bass of the sound system throbbing deep in his chest. Tonight was going to be so much fun.

Dean Winchester was a good soldier. He followed orders and played by the rules—when the rules needed to be followed. He certainly wasn’t a saint, but it was because he knew which orders needed to be followed and which rules could be bent without breaking them. It made him popular among his peers in the Lawmen, and well-liked by his superiors. Being the son of the Lawmen

Chief wasn't a strike against him either.

He had a natural talent for objectivity—when it didn't involve his own family of course—and his opinion on matters of contention was often sought and accepted for resolutions. He was able to calmly but firmly insert himself into most any kind of family feud or friendly brawl and diffuse the situation without violence. Both parties usually left afterwards feeling somewhat unhappy with the result, but that just meant it had been fair. Even though he was just one and twenty, he was a well-respected man about town.

He could keep a cool head no matter the situation—so long as it didn't involve his family. Or the Engels. Everyone knew that if they had a dispute with an Engel, Dean or any other Winchester was the last person to call. Or the first if they wanted to screw over the Engels and risk the wrath of possibly the most powerful family in the city. Dean knew the hatred was irrational—he didn't even know why the Winchesters and Engels hated each other so much—but he was loyal so he accepted his father's say on the matter. And that was why he was tying a black bandana over his head and pulling a silver mask over his eyes and nose—so that he could sneak into the Engel's heavily guarded estate and get his uppity, troublesome brother back before anyone realized a Winchester—two Winchesters—had crashed the party of the year.

Hannah Engel was a good girl. She was demure and polite and new all her lessons and spoke Enochian better than anyone but her grandmother, who had spoken it as a first language. She always obeyed her parents—except when she just couldn't. She always held her tongue—except when something just slipped out. She was always a picture of decorum—except when she was ticked off and someone really had it coming. She was the darling of her family without a doubt; doted on by the large family of siblings, cousins, aunts, and uncles that lived on the massive Engel estate. That is when she wasn't being scolded for scraping her knees or tearing her dress by playing with the servants' kids after lessons.

All of that had to stop though because she had had her coming out just in time for her family's annual masquerade ball. Otherwise she would have had to spend another year watching from the balconies with the other children until the nannies ushered them away for bedtime. She was fourteen this year though, and had been presented at Joanna Beth Harvelle's Yod Het Celebration—eighteen years being the mark of young adulthood for both girls and boys—and was now officially able to attend parties and go on outings. With a chaperone accompanying her, of course. She wouldn't be free of her chaperone until she was Jo's age.

However, at her family's own party in her own house—she was given about as free a reign as she was expected to get. She found a few of her friends from school, though several of the girls she didn't recognize because of the masks. It's possible they were the less than popular girls taking the opportunity to live a little like the popular girls. Hannah didn't mind. In fact she thought it was great. That's what was so wonderful about these masquerade balls: everyone was equal. There were no Houses or Council favorites. Nobody was more important than anyone else because of the name they happened to be born to. It was always a wonderful night, which usually lasted well into the early morning hours. Her older cousins and siblings had a tradition of welcoming the sunrise by removing their masks. She hoped to join them if she didn't fall asleep by midnight.

Castiel Engel was a problem child. Always had been. His desire to be good and obedient was always trumped by his curiosity and compassion. It had been tolerated in his youth, but after his Yod Het, greater expectations had been placed on his shoulders. He'd struggled with his nature and his family's expectations in the two year interim, but had found that by joining the Engel

family's personal guard that he had a place where he could fit in. He could attend all family functions, as was befitting his station, but he was never obligated to have to interact with anybody. The social graces that came so easily to his brothers and sisters and cousins often eluded him. He and Uncle Marv were the only two Engels who couldn't hold a conversation for two minutes without making other people feel awkward or uncomfortable.

He had found his stride in the guard though, easily commanding the respect of the unit he'd been assigned even though in some cases he was half his subordinates' ages. He was a natural born tactician and knew how to lead without micromanaging. It also helped that for the most part the Engel family lived a fairly sheltered life due the protection of the town itself, but they were often targets of disgruntled citizens and dissenters. And there were always the Winchesters to look out for. Always causing mischief and in general trying to undermine the Engel's authority with false charges and embarrassing "random" security checks when their assets went in and out of the town walls. That technically wasn't even the Winchesters' purview—the Lafittes were responsible for the town's defense. Clearly it was harassment, but their grievances were usually denied when brought before the tribunes at the monthly Council.

Castiel found solace in his position as a family guard, but he couldn't deny he loved the masquerade ball—the one night of the year he could forget who he was because everyone around him didn't know to treat him like he was "that oddball Castiel." He suddenly gained confidence and became downright charming when he was given anonymity. It was by far the best night of the year for his romantic exploits. Not that there was much romance on masquerade night—it was mostly about sex. And could be quite dangerous if one really couldn't tell who they were fooling around with in the dark corners of the third floor balcony—Castiel was fairly certain he'd made out with a second cousin the year before. But what were second cousins for if not to be kissing cousins?

Castiel's night of merrymaking was cut short unfortunately when his aunt found him and twisted a lace handkerchief in her hand as she told him how worried she was for her youngest daughter, Hannah. She had disappeared with a group of children over an hour ago and hadn't been seen since. Castiel patted his aunt's hands and promised to find the girl even though he was certain she was just out in the gardens or nicking sweets from the dessert table before it had been put out for the other guests.

Castiel made his way over to the small band of men and women who were still technically on active guard duty. After a few more drinks, everyone in the Family Guard would be too blitzed to actually serve their purpose. The real security for the night was the hired third party guards who walked the perimeter of the grounds. They wouldn't be let anywhere near the booze.

"Inias, Muriel, Hester. How goes the evening so far?"

"Not too bad," Inias said. "The margaritas are excellent."

Castiel smiled. "Glad to hear it. So, Auntie Naomi is concerned that Hannah has gone missing."

"How could you even tell in this crowd?" Muriel asked as she looked out at the mass of writhing bodies in the large banquet hall. Above them several stories worth of balconies were also brightly lit and crowded as spectators took a breather and watched the goings on below. All except the third balcony which was dark and "off limits."

"You know how Auntie likes to keep tabs on everyone and everything," Hester mumbled. "I'm surprised she doesn't have a GPS device disguised as a piece of jewelry on her."

“Have you tried the White Purgatories?” Inias asked. “Superb.”

Castiel tried not to roll his eyes, but he didn’t think he was successful.

“You all have been supremely helpful. I’m to go look for her. Give it another thirty minutes of looking like you’re working, and then off you go.”

There was a general chorus of pleased noises as he turned and walked away. He walked around the raised perimeter of the large ballroom, and then slid his fingers down the marble slab masquerading as a railing as he descended the monolithic stone steps that led from the grand foyer down onto the main floor. His eyes were scanning the crowd—but he wasn’t sure what about his cousin he’d be able to discern from the scores of identically dressed bodies mixed in with the colorful explosions of dresses and suits worn by those who deemed themselves too old for such games.

Castiel’s hand registered it immediately when the cold chill of marble gave way to something warm and yielding. Dean turned his head when he felt a hand land on top of his. He smiled at the man with bright blue eyes who was being quite forward. Then he turned his smile into a smirk and dropped his eyes to his hand. Castiel noticed the captivating green eyes of a back-clad masquerader drop to their hands—where his was still covering the stranger’s. He snatched his hand back.

“Apologies,” Castiel said, and then cleared his throat.

“None needed,” Dean replied. He allowed his eyes to sweep over the trim figure in front of him. He spent more time seeking pleasure in the company of women, but every now and then an exception did come along. The man looked nervous, even with the benefit of the mask covering most of his features, so Dean decided to help him relax. He took the stranger’s hand in his and brought it to his lips.

“I should be the one apologizing, my dear sir. To allow something so beautiful and perfect to be defiled by a hand as rough as mine is the real crime.” He kissed the man’s knuckles, enjoying the way his lips parted and his eyes darkened.

Castiel was caught off guard, for just a moment, and then he laughed and pulled his hand free. He flicked his finger against the hard plastic covering the man’s forehead and he started back, surprised by his sudden loss of control.

“I don’t know you, *sir*, but I can feel by the calluses on your hand that you’re every bit as rough as I am and flowery language is the last thing either of us desires.”

Dean grinned. “So, you’re more of ‘damn, I’d like to bend you in half and fill you with my come up against a wall’ kind of a guy.”

Castiel bit his lip to keep from grinning. He lost the battle when the man smiled with his too pretty lips and his eyes glinted with the promise that he wasn’t just teasing Castiel with his words.

“I said I didn’t desire flowery, not that I wanted vulgar.”

Dean laughed and stepped up onto the same stair as his quarry. He was pleased to find that he had a couple of inches on the guy not only in height but in breadth too. Castiel tried to discreetly suck in a breath as the stranger stepped right into his space and filled his vision. The man’s shirt was almost too tight, but it wasn’t doing him any harm, only accentuating how capable he was of carrying through with his claim that he could take Castiel up against a wall. What he wouldn’t give for a wall at that moment.

“Sir,” Castiel began, “there’s nothing I would like more than to continue this discussion in one of the more secluded areas of the topiary garden on the east lawn—believe me, *nothing more*—but I’ve been charged with finding an errant cousin.”

Dean licked his lips when the man emphasized the “nothing more” and smiled at his good fortune when he heard the man’s reason for declining his advances.

“Then we have found each other for more than one reason, *sir*. I’m also in search of a missing family member, and it seems that you know something of the grounds.”

“A bit,” Castiel admittedly wryly.

“Perfect. Then you know of the places a fourteen year old boy might sneak off to?”

“Ah, and I’m looking for a fourteen year old girl. They would probably find the same bits of trouble.”

“No doubt. Where should we try first...?” Dean trailed off, waiting for the man to supply a name.

Castiel opened his mouth to reply, but then hesitated. He didn’t recognize the man at all, but that didn’t mean the man wouldn’t recognize him. He might get self-conscious or utterly turned off if he knew he was dealing with the awkward and often (unfairly) described as grumpy Castiel Engl. He’d hesitated too long. It was growing awkward already.

“Steve,” he blurted out.

“Steve?” Dean asked with a raised eyebrow, recognizing the alias for what it was. He had his own reasons for hiding his identity; he certainly wasn’t going to question “Steve’s” reasons for doing so. “It’s a pleasure, Steve,” he said leaning forward and greeting him formally and traditionally with a kiss on each cheek. Then he put his lips by his ear. “You can call me, D.”

Castiel shivered when the man’s warm breath ghosted over his ear. He turned to face him and they were about three seconds away from desperately tongue fucking their way to the closest flat surface. He stepped down, putting space between them and looked over his shoulder.

“This way, D. The fastest way to the gardens is through the east wing.”

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Two hours later, Dean laughed as he skidded around a corner, Steve’s hand in one hand, a stolen apple tart in the other. Castiel realized he was more giggling than laughing as his shoes slid on the smooth marble floors of the hallways and he crashed into D’s back, making them both careen into a wall. They paused for a moment, catching their breath. Then they heard the angry shouts of two kitchen assistants echoing off the cavernous halls as they gained ground on them.

“Go, go,” Castiel whispered and shoved D toward a hallway lined with three elevators. They slipped onto the middle one just as the doors were shutting, nearly taking out the couple that had been exiting. He hit the buttons for all the floors except the second level.

“What’d you do that for?” Dean asked, confused by Steve’s decision to play the stereotypical childish prank when there was nobody in the elevator but them.

“Because if they go into the elevator bank and watch to see what floor we stop on, they might be confused if it just keeps going.”

“Hmm,” Dean murmured because he was taking a bite of his sixth apple tart.

They had spent the last two hours searching the grounds of the Engel estate (which Dean was not going to admit was gorgeous), looking in every location a couple of kids might go to look for some fun or privacy. Along the way they'd had pretty good sport spying on and gossiping about all the other party goers they happened upon. Particularly scandalous was the matriarch of the Harvelle family, dressed in a beautiful gold gown, being felt up by a black-clad masquerader (who was possibly her daughter's age) behind the unicorn topiary. They'd been thrilled for the woman. If anyone needed a little anonymous fun on Masquerade Night—it was certainly her.

Along the way they'd frightened several children who vaguely reminded them of their missing charges, stolen seventeen desserts, laughed at each other's stupid jokes, felt each other up four times without actually kissing, and even shared one heartfelt moment that left them both wanting to unmask the other so that they wouldn't lose each other at the end of the night—and completely unaware that the feeling was mutual.

The elevator stopped on the third floor and Dean stepped off, pulling Steve behind him.

Castiel's heart lurched to his throat and his stomach dropped to his feet. He felt utterly nauseated—but in a good way.

“W-why are we getting off here?” Castiel asked, embarrassed by the breathiness of his voice.

“Well, we haven't looked here yet. They are fourteen. That's old enough to...you know...”

Castiel nodded, but his nervousness was tamped down by the completely unpleasant thought of some trappy boy or girl molesting his sweet cousin.

“You know *what*?” Castiel asked, feigning ignorance in order to distract himself from thoughts of his cousin and to tease D.

Dean smiled when he heard Steve's question. He turned and walked backwards, leading him by the hand through the dim corridors that despite large columns—so big around that two grown men wouldn't be able to touch each other's hands if they reached around it—and heavy drapery were still lit by the bright lights of the ballroom.

“I could explain it to you, or I could show you...” Dean offered the man a choice, pulling him past one pillar that already had a couple occupying the dark corner created by its massive curve.

Castiel quickened his pace to step right into Dean's space and pushed him up against the one stark black marble pillar in the row of gleaming white stone. He kept moving until he pressed against D from chest to knees. He leaned close and tilted his head, bringing their lips together in the mockery of a kiss.

“Show me,” he whispered.

Castiel gasped in real shock as he was picked up around the waist and shoved back into the corner of the balcony and the pillar. D's lips were already on his and a knee forced between his thighs. Dean reached a hand around and grabbed one firm ass cheek in his hand—getting the desired result of Steve's mouth falling open. He thrust his tongue into his hot mouth, tasting honey from the sweet croquette he'd last eaten. He rolled his hips, over and over, encouraging the man to ride his leg. Castiel could feel that he was hard against D's thigh. He could feel that he was dizzy with the sudden rush of blood through his body as D sucked on his tongue. He could hear himself making the most pitiful, needy whimpers he'd ever made in his life. Dean dug his fingers into Steve's arms as he grinded him into the pillar.

“So good. So sweet.” Dean slipped his tongue into his new friend's mouth again. “Steve...so

good...”

“Mm...not Steve,” Castiel murmured around D’s kisses. He didn’t want to hear him saying another man’s name. “My name—”

“Doesn’t matter, baby. Doesn’t matter.” Dean moved his hands to the man’s head, fingers stopped from tangling with his hair because of the bandanna. It didn’t stop him from holding the man in place as he rutted harder.

Castiel squeezed his eyes shut and felt himself teeter on the brink of orgasm. The realization that he was about to come in his pants after barely two minutes of dry humping was enough to calm his mind. At least a little. He tore his mouth away from D’s biting kisses.

“D...wait. We...we can’t. We have to find...my cousin. Anh! Ah! And your...oh, fuck, your brother.”

“Then we should look for them,” Dean growled.

He pulled away from the man and took a moment to gloat at the wild, feverish look in his eyes and his red, swollen lips. Then he turned him forcibly by the shoulder and pushed him against the wide railing that overlooked the ballroom floor. A trendy pop song easily reached their ears from the speakers mounted on the level below them, and Dean pushed the man forward so that he was braced against the wide, stomach-high slab of marble that separated them from a three story fall. He kicked the man’s feet apart and dragged his lower lip through his teeth in anticipation when he heard the man’s sharp intake of breath. Castiel felt D lean against his back, his hands reaching around to unzip his fly as he kissed the nape of his neck. He shivered, uncertain if this was actually happening. Was D seriously going to fuck him against the railing, where they were now completely visible to anyone who just happened to look up? Or over for that matter.

Dean shoved his partner’s pants and underwear down to his thighs in one movement. Castiel gasped and dug his blunt nails into the unrelenting marble. He should stop this. He heard the sound of D’s zipper being pulled down slowly. He heard his harsh breathing. Castiel was paralyzed with fear for a moment that he was just going to fuck him dry. Then he felt the velvety glide of a hot, hard cock sliding between his thighs. D’s cockhead hit the back of his balls. Castiel groaned and squeezed his thighs together.

Dean wrapped his arms around the man’s chest and pulled him back, stifling his own groan as he smeared pre-come on those silky thighs. He thumbed the man’s nipples erect through his thin dress shirt and kissed and licked and bit the spot behind his ear, reveling in the way he writhed and fought futilely against the mounting pleasure in his body.

“Fuck, baby, you feel so good,” Dean repeated, unable to let go of the thought of exactly how good he felt—how perfectly they fit together. “You be a good boy and look down. Do your job and look for our missing troublemakers.”

Castiel was blushing furiously. Kinky sex wasn’t really something that embarrassed him, but he’d never done so much in such a public setting before. He could see people below them. They weren’t so far that he couldn’t recognize faces. He saw a couple members of his unit. He saw some cousins. He spotted his Aunt Naomi talking to Fergus Crowley. He closed his eyes and dropped his head back on D’s shoulder. His cock bounced in front of him with each gentle thrust of D’s cock between his legs.

Dean could feel himself losing his mind. His hands roamed all over the man’s body, his teeth had claimed his earlobe, his cock was slipping wet and sticky between the sweetest thighs Dean had ever have the pleasure of being between. And all he could think about was that he wanted—

needed—more. He couldn't wait to get this man somewhere he could spread him out, open him up, and fuck into him nice and deep.

“Damn, baby. *Angel*. Gonna fuck you so good after we find those stupid kids. Drop them off where they belong, and then I'm going to take you home and dive in balls deep.”

“Yes, yes,” Castiel panted, his hand stripping his cock in a relentless motion that had nothing to do with the maddeningly slow rhythm D was still playing at. “Promise me, D. Promise me you'll fuck me full.”

Dean put both hands to the pleading man's hips and pulled him back hard. Castiel cried out as he finally got the roughness he was looking for.

“Stuffed full, baby,” Dean promised as he bent his partner at the waist.

Castiel leaned against the railing, the stone cooling his heated cheek as D draped himself over his back and rutted between his legs like an animal.

“I promise. I'll fill you with my cock, and then I'll fill you with my seed.”

Castiel's eyes flew open at his words. D's thrusts were pushing his cock into the tight grip of his fist, pushing him so close to the edge of orgasm he almost didn't have enough sense to be floored by D's words.

“Do you mean it?” Castiel asked. “You'd want to...you'd want to...without a...”

Dean realized what he allowed to slip out of his mouth. Of course he'd been fantasizing about what it would be like to bury himself bare inside this sweet ass—but he would never actually do it. To come inside another person—it was unheard of except between married couples. In a sense, he'd just proposed to a man whose name he didn't even know.

Dean kept up his rhythm and moved his hand down to push the man's out of the way so he could stroke his cock for him.

“Would you want me to?” Dean asked, a little breathless.

“Oh, fuck,” Castiel moaned as he felt himself teetering on the edge. He was about to come and he was about to say something stupid. “Yes, yes. Tonight. Take me home and come in me. I want it.”

Dean let out a string of swear words as he suddenly climaxed. He continued to rut between the man's legs until his thighs were coated in his spend. He slowed minutely and only realized his partner had also come when he felt him trying to stop his hand from pulling on his spent, oversensitive cock. Dean slumped against his back.

“Baby...I've never...”

He trailed off, not sure how to finish that thought.

“Me neither,” Castiel said. He was certain that their little exchange could be—and would be—easily dismissed as mid-coitus dirty talk. They certainly weren't bound by any of their careless declarations. Castiel's family would object to any match they hadn't made themselves anyway. Though he supposed it couldn't hurt to at least put forth D's name as a candidate. Whoever the hell he really was.

They'd done a half-assed job of getting themselves cleaned up and their clothes put back in place.

Castiel had just worked up enough to courage to ask for D's identity when the man suddenly leaned over the wide expanse of the railing and pointed down at the ballroom floor.

"There! That's him. I'd know that shitstick's lanky ass anywhere."

Castiel leaned over to look where D was pointing. He saw a girl and boy, both dressed in masquerade black, stepping onto the moon roof elevator. If the boy belonged to D, then the girl had to be an Engel. There was a good chance that was Hannah.

"I think he's with the one I'm looking for," Castiel said and thumped D's arm with the back of his hand. "Let's go!"

D followed after Castiel as he ran back for the elevators. He bypassed them and started taking the stairs down.

"Hey, where are you going?" Dean asked. "They went up!"

"I know, but they used the moon roof elevator."

Dean puffed behind—hell, "Steve" was "Baby" now—and had to turn his body sideways to push through the crowds on the lower level in order to keep up with him. They arrived at a large, white tube that rose from the floor to the ceiling—nearly twenty stories up. Dean had assumed it was just decoration. Then Baby produced a card and waved it in front of an electronic lock. A previously invisible door slid open and Dean stepped into the small space behind Baby and blanched when the door closed behind them and the floor started moving up. It was horrifying really. They weren't in an elevator car being pulled up, the floor was literally being pushed up while the walls remained stationary. If Dean were a religious man he'd be praying about now.

"We have two of these elevators. One at either end of the hall. They only go from the main level to the roof. It really affords a great view. And only members of the Engel family have a cardkey for it, so that had to be the person I was looking for with your brother."

Dean gave him a nervous smile as his stomach clung to his legs somewhere by his ankles as the floor rose steadily, though both too slowly and too quickly for his comfort. That's why it took a full fifteen seconds for what the man said to sink in. He looked up at him.

"Only...members of the Engel family have card keys?" he asked.

Castiel smiled a little embarrassedly. He'd kind of blown his cover. Though there were dozens of Engels. Maybe D didn't know he was the awkward weirdo of the family. He was about to speak when D reached forward and hooked his thumb under his mask. He pulled off Castiel's mask and bandana and let them fall to the floor.

Dean stared—mouth dry, chest tight—at Castiel Engel. Castiel—the man responsible for moving an Engel property line marker that caused his mentor, Lawman Singer, to be "trespassing," resulting in his arrest. The man who had hauled in Sam when he'd tried to stand up for Bobby and consequently got him six months in community service and made him fall behind a year in school resulting in his brilliant brother having to repeat a grade and being looked down on by his peers. The man, who even if he'd done nothing else to harm his family, was an Engel and therefore an enemy.

Castiel was confused by D's blatant breach of masquerade etiquette by unmasking him without his permission, but he was unnerved by the barely controlled rage that tightened his lips and darkened his eyes. Castiel reached up and pushed D's mask and bandanna off as well. They made soft plops on the floor when they landed. Castiel swallowed with difficulty as he stared into the eyes

of Dean Winchester—the Lawman who had “accidentally” shot and killed his Uncle Zachariah barely a year ago. A Winchester. In the Engel Estate.

They both reached to their hips for the weapons that weren’t there and took a step back though there was no room in the tube to put distance between them. As he moved, Castiel felt the sticky pull of dried come between his legs. He flushed with anger and embarrassment as he realized that he’d let a Winchester bend him over and fuck his thighs.

The moon roof elevator reached its destination and the door slid open. Castiel backed out quickly as Dean lunged for his throat. He turned at the last moment and grabbed Dean’s shoulder. He managed to use his momentum to throw him forward to the ground. Dean caught himself in enough time to turn around and block the punch aimed at his face, but got socked in the gut for his troubles. Doubled over, he went for Castiel’s knees and they landed on the hard concrete of the roof with pained grunts and hissed curses. They grappled violently for a moment before a female shouted at them in distress. It distracted Castiel and he looked up. Dean punched him in the mouth. He kicked his leg viciously and it landed in the joint where hip met thigh. Dean gasped in a short breath and was momentarily stunned into inaction, which was good for Castiel because he needed a moment for his head to stop spinning.

“What are you doing, Dean?” a boy’s voice shouted.

Dean recognized his brother’s voice and looked up. He and a girl, still wearing their masks, were leaning over them. Dean got to his feet, absolutely livid and hauled his brother by the arm toward the elevator. Castiel got to his feet and pulled off Hannah’s mask just to verify it was her.

“What the hell are you doing?!” Castiel shouted at her.

Hannah flinched and her chin quivered as she fought back angry tears.

“Dean, what are you doing here?!” Sam yelled. “And we can’t go down unless we have the card key!”

Dean stopped running his hands over the smooth walls of the tube, vainly searching for a “down” button. He looked out at Castiel and his cousin. Castiel was grinning maliciously.

“Yeah, *D*,” he said with a sneer. “You can’t get down without a card key. So we’ll wait until we can call for an escort for you and your brother.”

Dean clenched his teeth together. He knew they wouldn’t be escorted off the premises. They’d be escorted to holding cells. Sam might make it out eventually, but Dean would probably wind up dead in some “terrible accident.”

“Or, you can always take the fast way down,” Castiel said, nodding his head toward the edge of the roof.

“Castiel!” Hannah shouted. “What is going on? Who is that man and why are you both acting like total jerks!”

“Hannah,” Castiel said, turning on his cousin. “The boy you’ve been spending time with is Sam Winchester. Youngest son of the Winchester Lawmen and your greatest enemy! And that man—his brother—Dean Winchester—he’s the one who killed your father!”

Hannah gasped and her eyes went wide. Sam looked stricken now and Dean—for just a moment—had winced with guilt at Hannah’s horrified expression. Then he smiled at Castiel with the same level of animosity as had been sent his way.

“Well, *Steve*, maybe I will take your advice and take the fast way down.”

“What?” Sam squawked, but stumbled after his brother as he dragged him toward the edge.

Castiel stared agog as Dean shoved his brother over the side and jumped after him. Hannah screamed and that jolted him to action. He ran over to the side and looked down, expecting to see two bodies splattered far below them on the ground. Instead he saw the Winchester brothers walking precariously along a narrow ledge and toward a section of the building that sloped gently to another ledge one story down. Of course, how could Castiel have forgotten how easily the Engel estate was to climb down? It was easy to climb up. He’d done it dozens of times in his youth, using the ugly, ill-fitting architecture of the west wing to provide a plethora of hand and toe holds and at times outright ladders to play on.

Even still, they were twenty stories up and one slip would mean certain death. He and Hannah were in a trance as they watched the two boys make their way down, slowly but efficiently. Castiel knew he should sound the alarm, but he couldn’t take his eyes off of them, convinced if he did they would slip and fall. And why would he care if they did? Good riddance to a couple of annoying, corrupted Lawmen. About halfway down, Dean led them away from the next piece that would let them slide down to the next level. He looked up, and even though his face was mostly just a light colored splotch in the dark of night against the dark colored building, Castiel could tell he gave him a wink. And then he and his brother disappeared into the wall. They must have found an open window.

“Did they fall?” Hannah asked, her voice shaky.

“No,” Castiel said and turned on his heel to walk toward the elevator. Hannah scurried after him.

“Are you going to fight him again? Inside?”

Castiel waved his card key over the lock and the door slid shut. The floor dropped slowly as it returned them to the main level.

“No, we’re going to let them go.”

“We are?” Hannah asked, hope coloring her voice.

“Of course. It would be bad manners to start a brawl in the middle of a party as lovely as this. Let them have their fun. I’m sure they’re leaving anyway. And they know the insult will not be tolerated. They will be dealt with tomorrow.”

“Oh, Castiel, is it really that big of a deal? So they came to a party.”

Castiel rounded on her, eyes flashing. “They came to an Engel party to mock us! Where is your respect for your family? Your father?!”

Hannah dropped her head, tears forming at the corners of her eyes. “I heard my father drew on him,” she sniffed miserably.

Castiel didn’t respond. He’d heard the same rumor.

“And I like Keith—”

“*Sam*,” Castiel ground out. “Sam Winchester.”

Hannah raised her head and looked at him defiantly. “Fine, Sam, whatever. I don’t care. I like him. He’s nice. And he thinks all this feuding is stupid! And so do I!”

Castiel shook his head. “The two of you are too young to understand.”

The elevator reached the ground floor and the door opened.

“Or maybe the two of you are too old to think without your heads up your asses!”

Hannah finally burst into tears and ran out of the elevator. Several heads turned to look at him. They all clucked their tongues and looked away—dismissing the incident as the freak upsetting someone—as usual. Castiel sighed and exited the elevator, unsure of what to do with himself. He decided a shower might be in order—to wash the taint of Winchester off his body.

As he walked toward the private elevators in the main part of the estate—sandwiched between the east and west wings—he blushed as he remembered the reasons why he was “covered in Winchester” as it were. He ignored the slight tremor in his hand as he used his card key to enter the personal quarters of the Engels. It was just because he was angry at the Winchesters’ audacity; he was not upset that the man he had befriended turned out to be an enemy. And it certainly wasn’t because he was remembering how good his hands had felt and how soft and sweet his lips were and how pleasurable it had been to feel his hard, velvety cock slipping between his thighs—

Castiel punched the wall and immediately regretted it as pain exploded in his hand. He shook it out as he got on the elevator and pushed the button for the fifteenth floor to take him to his room. Dean Winchester had humiliated him. He’d probably known all along it was him and had laughed behind his back as he’d defiled him. The next time he saw the man, there would be a reckoning.

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Dean fingered the gun at his belt as his eyes slid warily around the market square. It was bustling with activity as merchants were out selling their wares and the citizens enjoyed the three hour break in their work schedule to handle personal errands and reset their brains for the afternoon.

It had been two days since the Engel Masquerade Ball and no one had come to their door demanding that he and Sam be arrested for trespassing. Perhaps they were waiting for the next Council meeting which would be in a couple of weeks in order to humiliate their entire family publicly.

“Dean Winchester!”

Dean grinned. Or maybe he was going to start a duel in the middle of the market square.

He turned around and saw Castiel Engel standing thirty yards away, flanked by two Engel lackeys. The buzzing conversations of the square died down one by one as people noticed that the Engels and Winchesters were facing off—again.

“Dean Winchester,” Castiel repeated his name and took two steps forward. “You have insulted the honor of my family for the last time. Do you admit it or are you a cowardly villain?” Castiel spat on the ground, a clear insult to the Winchester family. Everyone in the square held their breath as they waited for Dean’s response.

“I am most certainly not a cowardly villain, but I have nothing to confess to.”

“Do you deny trespassing on the Engel property and corrupting a child of the Engel name?”

Dean was a confused for a moment, wondering if Castiel was referring to himself and their escapade on the third floor balcony. Then he realized he was implying he had done something to

his young female cousin.

“You dog,” Dean ground out, feeling real anger now. “Making false accusations *again* in order to get rid of the people that would keep your family honest. You vile...shitbag.”

Their audience let out a nervous huff of laughter. Castiel’s lips twitched and Dean swore it was to fight back a smile.

“Eloquent,” Castiel said dryly.

“Do you challenge me, sir?” Dean shouted loud enough for everyone to hear.

“I do, sir,” Castiel replied quietly.

“In a place such as this?” Dean tsked. “Typical that an Engel has no regard for anyone’s safety but his own.”

Castiel held his arms out to his sides and one of the people with him, a woman, stepped forward and removed the gun from his holster. The second person, a man, removed knives from his boot and beneath his sleeve.

“I am unarmed now,” Castiel said bitingly.

Dean felt his face contort into a snarl and felt like shooting the fucker right where he stood for challenging him to hand to hand combat with no way to withdraw or get backup of his own. He felt a hand on his wrist and looked over to see his friend Benny Lafitte stopping him from grabbing his gun. He removed the gun from its holster and asked if he had any other weapons on him. Dean almost lied, but then admitted to having a knife tucked into his boot. Benny removed that too. The crowd had started to circle around them.

Dean and Castiel moved forward slowly, eyeing each other carefully, looking for weaknesses or telegraphing. The more tense and anxious the crowd got, the more tension formed in Dean’s shoulders. He could tell that Castiel wasn’t much better. They got within a few paces of each other and braced themselves for a fight. They lunged forward, both aiming to hit to knock out—and then there was shouting and general chaos as a runaway horse and carriage burst through the crowd, dispersing them in the chaotic scatter of people running for their lives. The nearby baker dove behind a pile of sacks of flour as the carriage hit his stand sent the tall shelves spilling forward.

Dean ducked and fell to his knees, covering his head. He heard screaming and the crash of the stand as it splintered around him. Then the shouting quieted as the horse was brought under control and people stopped running and crashing into things. Dean felt something warm sliding down the back of his neck. He reached back to see if it was blood, but when he brought his hand back it was covered in a sticky brown substance that smelled sweet and cinnamon-y. He tentatively put a finger to his mouth and licked some off. It was apple pie filling. He realized then that he was covered in about seven different kinds of pie.

He heard a snort of laughter and looked up, ready to be annoyed and angry that an Engel dare laugh at him. But then he burst into laughter. Castiel Engel was covered head to foot in white flour—his eyes a stark blue as they peered out of his white face. They smiled at each other’s appearance for a moment. And then they scowled and leapt to their feet.

Before they could resume their never started fight, the baker hollered at them to help him get his stand back upright. The baker blamed them for the mess, but they certainly hadn’t caused the horse to go wild. The baker blamed the tension for the horse’s unease and they were the cause of

the tension. Grumbling they helped the man and then were pulled away by their respective parties to keep them from resuming the fight.

A couple hundred yards away, Hannah Engel and Sam Winchester peered over the top of the bales of hay they hid behind. Hannah dropped the garden snake she'd used to spook the horse and shot a look at Sam.

"Would you call that a success or a failure?"

Sam looked around at the disaster area that used to be the market square as people starting cleaning things up and attending to minor wounds. Castiel and Dean were being led away from each other, neither having shed the other's blood. He looked back at Hannah.

"Success?" he asked.

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A week after his almost duel with Dean Winchester in the market square, Castiel wandered the perimeter of the city plotting his next move. They'd both been reprimanded by Council members for stirring up trouble—not that that stupid horse had been their fault at all. However, it had been enough for them both to cool their heels temporarily. They had plenty of time to kill each other before the Council met in a week and forced a resolution between them. More than likely it would be non-violent unless they asked for an official duel. Castiel wasn't sure he was a quicker draw than Winchester, but he could probably kick his ass in a knife fight. Which meant the Council wouldn't let their duel be done with either guns or knives. Which in turn meant it would be hand to hand combat. He'd been foolish enough to provoke that very thing in the market square, but it wasn't something he really wanted to do. The only thing worse than the thought of being pummeled to death was the thought of feeling a human's body turn to pulp under his fists. He shuddered at the thought. And who would want to ruin Dean's pretty face anyway? Castiel scowled. Fuck Winchester and his good looks. He was a Winchester and he deserved to die no matter how pretty his lips were.

Castiel stepped gingerly over the large gaps in the grating that covered the sewage tunnel that led out of the town into the river downstream. He didn't know who might live down stream of them, but he hoped there was no town upstream from them. Fortunately it was the tunnel that led from the bathhouses and not the privies, so the smells in the air were only from slightly stagnant water.

"*You*. The fuck are you doing here?"

Castiel looked up and saw Dean Winchester stepping down from the stairs that led to the top of the wall.

"What are *you* doing here, Lawman?" Castiel demanded. As a member of the Governing family, it was the Engels' responsibility to investigate any potential municipal violations. Hannah had come to him that morning with a message from her mother that the Masons were not maintaining the tunnels correctly. He was out here to inspect the grating, especially the bits that guarded the exit—and potential stealthy entrance—to their city. Of course he had been sent. Castiel was best suited to these kinds of jobs—away from people and near sewage.

"Not that it's any of your damned business, you guinea pig faced chicken fucker, but there was a report of illegal dumping in the bathhouse drain.

"What did you call me?" Castiel demanded and hopped onto the next grating bar, two feet away.

Dean easily stepped onto the next bar, returning his glare as they approached each other.

“You heard me, you weasel licking cocksucker.”

“Well, my tongue sure is busy isn’t it?”

“Hard to see how though with all the blah blah blah you—whoa!”

Dean cut off as Castiel yelped when they both stepped onto the same bar and it spun under their feet. They slipped between the bars and were unable to grab a hold of them as they were too disoriented. Plus Castiel’s side was smarting from where his ribs had smashed into it on the way down. He landed in the two inch deep stream of water below with a crunch and a groan. Dean’s muffled cursing informed him he wasn’t much better off. Above them, panicked voices called out as he heard the ringing of careful feet stepping on the bars.

“Castiel? Are you okay? I told you this was a stupid idea,” Hannah snapped.

“I didn’t think they would actually fall through the bars,” Sam replied, his voice tight with concern.

“The fuck are you two doing?” Dean bellowed up at them.

Castiel grimaced as he sat up and glared at Dean for making so much racket. He looked up and saw his cousin and Dean’s brother peering down at them through the bars. They were about ten feet up. Too far to jump up and grab the bars.

“Sorry,” Hannah said. “We just thought if you two were alone you could talk it out.”

Castiel made a face and then glanced over at Dean. He hooked a thumb in the children’s direction and gave him a “are they fucking morons?” look. Dean shrugged back at him. He looked up at his brother.

“This is not going to be solved with words, Sam. Mortal enemies, remember? Aren’t you supposed to be so smart? Look it up.”

Sam rolled his eyes.

“But we’re going to kill the both of you first,” Castiel grumbled. “Go find some rope to help us out of here.”

“If one of you gave the other a boost, you could reach the bars,” Hannah pointed out.

“And which one do you propose to do the boosting, Hannah?” Castiel asked. “Who is going to put himself in that vulnerable of a position and who is going to risk getting left behind?”

“Oh my gosh you two are such babies.”

“You two stop being a couple of idiots,” Dean ground out. “And get some fucking rope! And don’t do it together for God’s sake! Act like you hate each other!”

Hannah and Sam made faces at him, but then their faces disappeared. Castiel felt dread settle into his stomach.

“You think they’re going to come back at all?” he asked, a little worried.

“They’d better,” Dean grouched.

“Oh!” Sam’s face appeared over them again. “Don’t kill each other while we’re gone.”

Then they heard the ringing of the bars as the two of them hopped across the grate and to solid land. Castiel turned a glare on Dean, who was glaring right back. Now that he was thinking of murder again—well, justified homicide—he reached for his gun. His hand hit thin air. He panicked and took eyes off of Dean to look at the holster. His gun was missing. It must have fallen out when he hit the ground. He looked at Dean; he still had his gun and his fingers were resting lightly on it. Castiel took a couple of steps back, his eyes scanning for his gun or something else to use as a weapon.

“Relax,” Dean muttered. “I’m not gonna shoot an unarmed man.”

Castiel didn’t relax at his words. It was hard to trust a dishonorable family with following the codes of honorable fighting.

“So, what are you gonna do?”

“I’m going to help you find your gun so I can shoot you in the face.”

Castiel rolled his eyes and swept his foot around in the water, feeling for his weapon. He kept his eyes on Dean. Dean, the asshole, dropped his eyes to look in the slightly murky water. Of course he had his hand on his gun, so what did he care if he looked away from his enemy?

Castiel thought he felt something and he chanced a glance down but it was only a rock. He darted his eyes back up and watched on with horror as Dean bent over and picked his gun up out of the water. There was a good chance it was waterlogged and wouldn’t work, but now Dean had two weapons and Castiel none. Dean held the weapon out, handle to Castiel. He gave him a blank stare. Castiel swallowed and had no choice but to ease forward one careful step at a time, moving closer to his enemy and potential murderer.

Castiel held Dean’s gaze—why were his eyes so damn pretty?—and reached forward to take the weapon. He snatched it back and leapt away. Dean left his weapon holstered.

“Does it work?” he asked.

Castiel raised his arm and aimed the barrel at Dean’s face. “Let’s see.”

He hesitated. It was dishonorable to shoot Dean like this. But who would know? There were no witnesses. He scowled and dropped his arm. He cocked the hammer and fired into the water. It clicked with an impotent “guh.” He let out the breath he’d been holding and looked at his weapon.

“Fuck.”

He tried to clear the jam so he could open the chamber and see how screwed up it was.

“Pull back the pin,” Dean said.

“I know!” Castiel snapped.

He struggled with the gun for a few more seconds and then heard an exasperated sigh.

“Fucking Engels. You don’t even know how to use guns. Why do you carry them?”

“Shut up! It’s just waterlogged!”

“That doesn’t mean you can’t open it! Give it here.”

Dean stepped forward and tried to take the gun from him. Castiel twisted to the side, keeping out of his grasp.

“No! Get away! Don’t touch it!”

“Just give it here! You’re going to break it. It’s too nice a gun to let you fuck it up.”

“Shut. Up.”

Castiel twisted again and Dean reached around him with both arms. They struggled for a moment, and then there was a splashing sound and Castiel realized his gun had fallen back into the water again. But he couldn’t be bothered with that because he was kissing Dean. He wasn’t sure who had initiated it, but he was the one with his hands tangled in Dean’s short hair so he could direct his head to the best angle for their lips to seal and their tongues to play in a sensual game of back and forth between their mouths. Dean’s hands were on his ass, swooping down to pick him up by the backs of his thighs and walk him to the wall of the tunnel so he could slam him up against it.

Castiel spread his legs and let Dean settle a thigh between them. He rubbed his erection up and down against the hard muscle of Dean’s thigh. Their gasping breaths and smacking lips echoed obscenely in the chamber. Before he knew it, their cocks were out and gathered in Dean’s large hand and Castiel keened and hummed and clawed at Dean’s back as he stroked their shafts furiously. Castiel came with Dean’s tongue in his mouth and a finger prodding his hole. He threw his head back to gulp in air as he shuddered through his orgasm and then felt himself sliding down Dean’s leg. His knees hit the ground and he was kneeling in the water in front a Dean. Dean who was still hard and leaking. His mouth fell open, surprised that Dean had held back. When Dean shoved his cock into his mouth, he understood why.

Castiel opened his mouth wide and curved his lips over his teeth. He tipped his head back slightly to open his throat and allowed Dean to thrust into him wildly. Tears gathered at the corners of his eyes and saliva dribbled down his chin from the corner of his mouth, but he did nothing but hold onto Dean’s hips as the man fucked his throat raw. He felt him tense, tasted the bitter saltiness of Dean’s precome. He knew what was coming. What it would mean for Dean to come down his throat...and he didn’t care.

Dean pulled back with only a second to spare and came all over his face instead. Castiel panted and put a hand to his groin as his dick twitched when he felt the thick, warm ropes of Dean’s seed crisscross his face. He heard Dean groan low in his throat. Castiel opened his eyes and was floored by how beautiful Dean looked as he savored his released. Then he opened his eyes and they stared at each other—both all too aware how close they had come to crossing a line reserved only for spouses.

Dean tucked himself back into his pants and Castiel stood up on shaky legs, putting himself away as well. He wasn’t sure what to do about his face when suddenly Dean was cleaning him with a damp, white handkerchief. He was oddly touched by the gesture until he realized why it must be wet.

“Did you just soak that in sewage water?!”

Dean shrugged. “It’s from the baths. It’s clean, right?”

“Ugh. You revolting, ignorant, idiotic—”

Castiel cut off when Dean kissed him. He kissed him back because if one or both of them were going to kill the other, they should do this while they could.

“Dean,” Castiel gasped into his mouth. “What are we doing?”

“Thought that was obvious,” Dean groaned and pushed their lips together again, making it impossible for Castiel to talk or think straight. He wasn’t sure how long they kissed, only that he was lightheaded and starting to suspect that Dean planned on sneakily suffocating him to death.

“Oh my God!”

Dean and Castiel jumped apart, wiping their mouths, and looking up at the source of the interruption.

Sam and Hannah peered down at them. Sam clutched a rope in his hand.

“Were you two...kissing?” Hannah asked.

“No,” Dean and Castiel said and Sam cackled out a “Yes.”

“That’s awesome!” Sam said. “So, you’re not fighting anymore, right?”

“Sam, don’t be an idiot,” Dean snapped. “Throw down the rope.”

Sam tied the rope to one of the bars and allowed it to fall down into the tunnel. He effortlessly climbed out and hauled himself through the bars.

“You coming, Castiel?” Hannah asked.

He kept his head down. “I need to find my gun first. And it would be better if you all left. If I find it and come out, Dean and I will face off.”

“What? You can’t mean that! You’re not still fighting.”

“It’s not a fight, Hannah!”

“That’s right,” Dean said gruffly. “It’s a feud. It’s a blood grudge. I killed your father, little girl. Does that mean nothing to you?”

Hannah shrank back. “I heard he drew first.”

Dean huffed. “He did. So what? He drew because I’m a Winchester and he’s an Angel. If he hadn’t drawn on me, I would have drawn on him.”

“No, you wouldn’t have,” Sam said, voice cracking with bitter anger.

Dean grabbed his arm and hauled him away. “You stay away from her!” he yelled as they hopped across the bars. “This isn’t some star-crossed lovers bullshit! You two need to stay away!”

“Oh, you’re calling *us* the star crossed lovers?” Castiel heard Sam’s fading shout.

He bent down and picked up his gun. He put it in his holster without even checking to see if it was in working condition. He climbed up the thin rope with a little difficulty, and let Hannah help pull him up. After they made their way across the grate, the Winchester brothers were long gone. Castiel exhaled sharply as he looked at Hannah with her hangdog expression.

“There was no report of municipal violations, was there?”

Hannah gave a slight shake of her head.

Castiel sighed softly. “Look, I understand what you and the Winchester boy are trying to do, but it’s not that simple. It’s not just between us. It’s between our families. It’s about the bad blood that’s always been between us. That can’t be solved by having a good heart to heart.”

“And why not?” Hannah demanded, raising her head. “Why can’t we all talk it out? Isn’t that what the Council’s for? And why do we hate each other anyway? No one even knows why anymore. Doesn’t that seem stupid?”

“It’s more complicated than that. You’re too young to understand.”

“No, I’m really not, Castiel. You’re too stupid to question what you’ve been taught!”

“And what are we if we do that? Anarchists?! You know what happens outside of these walls! What life is like for those who question authority!”

Hannah drew herself up. “I thought we prided ourselves on being better than the Outsiders. That we can think for ourselves and settle matters without violence! There’s no need to fight any of the Winchesters. Especially Dean. Not when you like him.”

“I don’t like him,” Castiel snapped.

“But...you were...”

“See? You’re too young to even understand that sex doesn’t have to have anything to do with liking someone.”

Hannah’s eyes went wide. “*Sex?*” she whispered the word. “I thought you were just kissing! You had *sex?*” she whispered the word again.

Castiel groaned and stomped away from her. “I’m through discussing this with you.”

“Castiel! That’s so great! You love each other!”

Castiel rolled his eyes as his cousin skipped after him. He didn’t bother to correct her. If she couldn’t understand angry kissing, she certainly wasn’t going to understand hate sex. And it was ludicrous. He wasn’t in love with someone he’d known for a week and fucked around with twice. Well, okay, technically he and Dean had known each other since they were children having grown up in the town and gone to school together. And perhaps they’d had a conversation or two during those school years when they’d been forced to work on homework together. And maybe he knew that Dean loved pie and good rock music and was a total mama’s boy, but he didn’t really know him. Except now, he “knew” him.

Castiel chuckled at his own joke. Then he caught Hannah grinning at him out of the corner of his eye. He put his scowl back in place and marched ahead of her.

~~~

Dean was backed by Christian, Gwen, and Mark this time. Castiel’s flunkies had nothing on his third cousins twice removed or what the fuck ever they were. They were away from public places, but there was still a large crowd gathering around them. The posturing had been going on between both groups for some time now. Neither seemed particularly inclined to be the first ones to incite violence, but they had to do it tonight. The Council was meeting tomorrow and they would force the Winchesters and Engels to handle it in a respectable manner. And where was the fun in that?

Cat calls and encouragement from the crowd punctuated the darkness. Four large torches provided the only light and occasionally guttered in the strong breeze that blew through the empty field. The crowd wasn't really for one side or the other—it was dangerous to pick sides against the Engels or the Winchesters—they just wanted a good show.

The Winchesters and the Engels made a show of disarming themselves. The crowd got louder. Christian threw the first punch. Of course he did. And then it was on. An ugly brawl broke out—punching and kicking and even hair pulling—though the women were the ones who had enough dignity not to resort to that. It got heated, but there was also an air of sport about it. Dean and Castiel grappled once or twice, but deliberately peeled away when they felt themselves getting too worked up with adrenaline and proximity. It was one thing to turn a fight into a fuck in a storm drain, but in front of half the town? Not a good idea.

Dean threw a skinny Engel over his shoulder and looked up in time to see Castiel punch Christian in the nuts. He grinned. He really didn't like Christian. Castiel caught his look and rolled his eyes slightly as he wiped the blood from his mouth—to hide his answering grin. Christian staggered toward Dean, cursing and cupping his balls.

“That bitch,” Christian spit out.

“He is feisty,” Dean said with a laugh and took the momentary reprieve in fighting to catch his breath as the Winchesters and Engels staggered to opposite sides of the circle. The crowd booed at them pausing and the fighters flicked them off.

“Dishonorable fuck head,” Christian muttered and pulled out a gun.

Dean's eyes went wide. He was supposed to be disarmed. He aimed at Castiel. Dean reached forward and pushed his arm.

“No!”

The gun went off. It missed Castiel, but the crowd was in a circle. Alarmed cries broke out as a spectator went down. Dean saw Hannah Engel standing near the victim, her hands over her mouth. Dean felt sick to his stomach. It wasn't possible. He sprinted across the circle and pushed his way through the clumping crowd and found Sam on the ground. But he was sitting up and breathing fine. He held his shoulder and winced slightly as he pulled his hand back. His palm was bloody, but it was clear the wound had been superficial. Dean dropped to his knees and let out a breath that was embarrassingly close to a sob.

“You okay, Sam?” he forced out.

“I guess. But who the hell kept their gun? Isn't that cheating?”

“Yes, it is!” shouted an indignant Engel.

Dean got to his feet, his rage making his vision swim. But he didn't advance on the shouter or Castiel or any other Engel. He ran straight at Christian and tackled him to the ground. He punched him in the face until his cousins and the crowd managed to pull him off. He knew he was shouting, but he had no idea what he was saying. By the time his head cleared, most of the crowd had dispersed and every single Engel had high tailed it out of there.

A couple people were helping Christian to his feet to get up and moving—he certainly wasn't capable of doing it on his own. Other people were hissing that they needed to leave before Lawmen who weren't aware of the brawl showed up to see what had happened. Dean staggered to his feet and found Sam. Someone had bandaged his arm with his torn sleeve. He pulled his

brother close and buried his face in his too long hair.

What would he have done if this stupid feud had resulted in Sam dying? It wasn't worth it. Sam's life was worth more than some stupid grudge from so long ago nobody even knew who started it. Sam tugged on him gently.

"Come on," he said. "Let's go home."

Dean nodded and released his brother so that they could walk slowly home, trying to come up with a good story to explain Sam's injury that wouldn't get his ass kicked by his father—or more frighteningly, by his mother. They were about halfway home when Dean said, "I'm sorry, Sam."

"For what?" he asked, sounding genuinely confused.

"For almost getting you killed."

Sam shrugged. "It was an accident. Besides, Christian shouldn't have had a gun."

"No, he shouldn't have, but I shouldn't have agreed to a public brawl like that."

"No, you shouldn't have. You and Castiel—"

"It was reckless and stupid and I shouldn't have let those fucking Engels talk me into it."

Sam sighed.

"It will be best to let the Council sort this out tomorrow. It'll probably be guns at twenty paces. But don't you worry, I can outdraw him."

Sam stopped walking and pulled on Dean's arm to make him stop.

"Are you joking? You want to duel with Castiel?"

Dean shrugged.

"You want to kill him?"

"He's an Engel—"

"So the fuck what?!"

Dean blinked, startled by Sam's vitriol and swearing.

"Dean...you...look, dude. You have feelings for him."

Dean balked. "I do not—"

"Shut up, you do. You two don't fight. You flirt. It's called foreplay."

Dean blushed. "How the hell do you know what foreplay is?" he grumbled.

"I'm fourteen; not a monk."

"It doesn't matter," Dean ground out and started walking again. "He's an Engel therefore he's an enemy. Who cares if I have some weird, demented thing for him? Nothing can come of it. Not that he would want it to anyway. He's hellbent on killing us for crashing the Masquerade Ball and insulting his family or whatever."

“Exactly. Or ‘whatever.’ Like, no one cares. Plus, he doesn’t want to kill you anymore than you do him. And how do you know nothing will come of it if you don’t try?”

Dean let out a humorless bark of laughter. “Because Winchesters and Engels don’t mesh, Sam. And our families would never allow it. You can’t just—end a blood feud because two kids make googly eyes at each other.”

“But...isn’t that what happened with Mom and Dad?”

“What?”

“The Winchesters and the Campbells. Men of Letters and Hunters. They hated each other, but Mom and Dad got married and now we’re Lawmen.”

Dean’s brow creased. “That wasn’t the same. That wasn’t a blood feud. It was just a serious dislike of each other’s families.”

“Well, what is a blood feud if not a ‘serious dislike?’”

“It’s very different. The Engels and Winchesters have hated each other since the city was founded.”

“So? You and Castiel don’t. Hannah and I don’t. Why fight?”

They arrived outside their family’s manner and Dean stopped and put both hands on Sam’s shoulders.

“Sam, I appreciate you trying to bring peace to the world or whatever, but...nothing is going to change what’s going to happen tomorrow.”

Sam’s face turned red and his features screwed up in hurt and frustration.

“Fine! Have your duel! I hope you die!”

Sam ran inside and Dean sighed. He wondered if the Council might decide to just fine them or something. Maybe if he and Sam admitted fault to trespassing on the Engel’s property, they would just make them paint the walls surrounding the Engels estate. More than not wanting to die tomorrow, he didn’t want to kill Castiel. He’d known him most of his life—from afar for the most part—but it would be sad to exist in a world where his grumpy face wasn’t around to scowl at him when Dean made inappropriate jokes during Council meetings.

Dean trudged inside the manor, allowing the servants to take his coat and weapons. He walked upstairs to his bedroom, bypassing Sam’s room even though the lights were on. He probably needed to throw some things around so he could feel better. He flicked on the lights when he entered his room, but then immediately flicked them off when the light hurt his eyes. He crossed the large room and flopped onto his soft bed. He winced as he felt the aches from the earlier fight start to set in. Then he heard a clack at his window. He raised his head, wondering if he was hearing things. Then he heard another clack.

Dean stood up and opened the double doors that led onto the balcony that overlooked the garden. Someone whispered his name. He walked across to the railing and looked down. Castiel stood in Dean’s mother’s petunias. She was going to be pissed.

“What are you doing here?”

“Can we talk?”

Dean strummed his fingers on the railing. Why would they need to talk? Perhaps Castiel was interested in proposing a fine as punishment to the Council as well. They'd have a better chance of avoiding a duel if they both agreed on the terms ahead of time.

"Okay. Hang on. I'll come down."

"Wait, wait. Can I come up?"

Dean cocked his head. "Can you?"

Castiel smiled and then disappeared from his view under the balcony. He heard some scrabbling and leaned over to try to see what the man was doing. He bent over more, not able to catch sight of him.

"Dean."

Dean spun around, his heart hammering in his chest as Castiel heaved himself onto the side railing. He stepped forward and offered a hand for Castiel to hold as he swung his legs over the railing and hopped down onto the balcony. Dean immediately dropped his hand once he was steady. He crossed his arms defensively.

"So. I guess you're here to discuss the terms of a fine that we can suggest to the Council instead of a duel."

"Oh. No. I came to see if Sam is okay. Hannah was worried."

Dean felt a little disappointed, and he wasn't sure why.

"He's fine."

"That's good."

"Yeah."

"I also had a second purpose in coming here."

Dean raised a brow. "The terms?"

"No."

Castiel stepped forward and took Dean's face in his hands. Dean's arms were already reciprocating the embrace before their lips even came together. Like before, their kisses were heated and fervent. The sound of fabric tearing danced on the periphery of their senses as they shed their clothes and walked toward Dean's bed.

Dean shoved a naked Castiel into the center of it and crawled on top of him. Castiel spread his legs, inviting him in.

"You promised you'd fill me with your cock," Castiel murmured in his ear. "I thought the Winchesters were honorable."

"Don't worry, angel, I'll *fulfill* your wishes."

He rocked his hips forward and Castiel groaned when their erections slid together. There was a wild tumbling of limbs as they worked their way up the bed and to the side to retrieve the lubricant in Dean's nightstand. When he had three fingers inside Castiel, Dean knew he needed to get his

cock in him soon or he was simply going to come on the sheets. He leaned down and tried to kiss the spellbound look off of Castiel's face.

"Baby. I'm gonna enter you now."

Castiel nodded. "Yes, yes, please. Hurry."

"I need to put on a condom though...right?"

Castiel shook his head. "Just pull out."

Dean growled as he heard the answer to the question he'd been trying not to ask. He slicked up his cock and pressed inside Castiel bare. They both groaned—much too loudly. Someone was definitely going to hear them. Dean kissed Castiel to stifle any further noises either of them would make and thrust into him, setting a hard, driving pace right from the beginning. It wasn't long before they couldn't kiss—they just clutched at each other and kept their eyes squeezed shut as they panted into the other's mouth.

Then Castiel let out a soft keening noise and Dean felt his body start to tense and lock up—and then he was coming. He felt it as Castiel's come splashed between their bodies and his hole spasmed around his dick. Dean almost lost it.

"Fuck, fuck, Cas...Cas, baby, I need to pull out!"

Castiel threw a leg around Dean's back and shook his head. Dean let out a sound that could only be described as a whimper and dropped his forehead to Castiel's shoulder as he came suddenly and hard. Dean dragged in ragged gasps of air as he felt himself pouring his seed into Castiel's body, and Castiel accepting it. He almost started crying it felt so good—and so frightening.

At last he lifted his head and looked down into Castiel's shining eyes.

"What have we done?" he asked.

"The right thing," Castiel replied.

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The next morning Dean woke up alone, with cold sheets where Castiel had lain for a couple of hours after their lovemaking. He'd wisely decided to go home rather than get caught inside the Winchester estate and reignite an even worse feud. Dean showered and dressed, but before he could make it downstairs for breakfast, his little brother hurled himself at him and smothered him in a hug.

"I didn't mean it!" Sam cried. "I don't want you to die!"

"Relax, you big baby. I'm not gonna die."

Sam sniffed. "But..."

"Don't worry. It'll all work out okay. You'll see."

He pushed his brother away and gave him a little wink before he sauntered down the stairs and plopped himself at the breakfast table. His father glared at him and his mother looked at him with worried eyes.

"Dean," she said, "you know today is the Council meeting, right?"

“Yeah, Mom, don’t worry. Me and the Engel asshat worked out an alternative to a duel.”

His mother signed in relief but his father scowled.

“Collaborating with an Engel? Not a Winchester.”

“Would you rather him risk his life in a duel?” his mother snapped.

His father frowned and bit into his toast with unwarranted viciousness. Dean’s mother patted his hand.

“That’s fine if you two worked out an arrangement. You can go back to your silly feud tomorrow.”

His father grumbled, but didn’t dare speak with his mouth full. Dean gave his mother a lopsided smile. She tilted her head as he smiled back, clearly suspicious that her son was up to something, but she didn’t press him for answers.

A couple hours later they—along with the entire town—were gathered in the Council Hall. In fact, it might just be the whole town who showed up as the cavernous, round room was filled to capacity. Apparently everyone was itching to see what would happen between the Winchesters and the Engels. The pairs of Winchesters, Harvelles, Lafittes, Crowleys, and Engels took their places on a dais. The stadium seating for the spectators fanned out from that point with a large circle in front of the dais where people petitioning the Council for permissions or rectifications of grievances could take the floor.

Despite everyone being antsy for the Winchester/Engel showdown, three other townspeople presented their petitions first. One person asked for another portion of communal land to feed his growing herd of cattle—a growth necessitated by the growth of the population of the city. It was granted. Then a woman demanded that she be paid for wool she spun and dyed for a client who insisted it was the wrong color even though a bill of sale was produced proving a color had not been specified. The spinner received her money. The third petitioner asked for the right to change Guilds—something that happened rarely and therefore sparked a lengthy debate.

Dean sweated and fidgeted as the Council members spent a long time debating the pros and cons of allowing a break in their carefully constructed order. Across the room he could see that Castiel looked pale and slightly nauseated. They weren’t unsure of the decision they had come to last night, but facing John Winchester and Michael Engel was not going to be fun.

At last the man was told he could change Guilds for a trial period of three months. If it didn’t work out, he would have to switch back. He agreed to the stipulations and left the floor. Finally, it was their turn.

The crowd murmured as their names were called and they stepped into the arena. They crossed the floor, eyes locked on each other. When they reached each other, keeping a respectable distance between them, they turned to face the Council.

“We hear it that the Engels and Winchesters feud has been causing distress in the town,” Ellen Harvelle said with disapproving eyes. “I take it the two of you are here to petition the Council to have a fair duel so that there will be no retribution on the part of the slain party’s family?”

“No, ma’am,” Dean said.

Ellen relaxed a little. “I’m glad to hear that. Shall we work out the terms of the fine? Who is the transgressor?”

“Winchester!” Naomi shouted from her perch. “They trespassed on our property. During the Masquerade Ball. And it wasn’t just one. There’s a second one. He’s old enough to face the consequences too. Where is he?”

The room’s murmuring grew louder.

“Silence!” Crowley bellowed and the room went quiet.

“Is there any validity to this claim?” Ellen asked.

“Of course not!” John Winchester shouted. “It’s the Engels trying trap my sons in a set up. Your invitations clearly read that anyone can come! You can’t ex post facto that to mean ‘No Winchesters!’”

“The ‘No Winchesters’ is implied,” Michael Engel started.

The Council started arguing and the room broke out into raucous noise. A gunshot made everyone gasp and go quiet. Everyone stared at the audacity of Dean Winchester to fire his weapon in the sanctity of the Council Hall.

“Dean Winchester,” Ellen started with a very menacing tone.

“Forgive me, ma’am,” he broke in. “I just didn’t see the point of letting the argument continue. Castiel Engel and I aren’t here to request a grievance be rectified.”

There was a general sound of “Huh?” that came from the room.

“Then why are you two here?”

Dean glanced at Castiel and he gave him a reassuring smile. Dean held out his hand and Castiel took it. They faced the Council.

“We are here to petition the council for the right to marry.”

Noise broke out in the room again and a woman in the third row fainted. John Winchester and Naomi Engel were on their feet, screaming their heads off—and demanding the heads of their enemies be delivered to them on platters. It took quite a while before the room settled and the Lafittes managed to get the rest of the Council members to sit down and shut up. Mary Winchester stood up.

“The council has no legal right to prevent two consenting parties from marrying. We can only grant legal recognition of the union. Therefore your petition for marriage is grant—”

“Wait!” John yelled as he stood up while Naomi shouted “That is hardly—!”

“Shut up!” Ellen yelled.

Before anyone could draw breath to speak again, Castiel said quickly, but very loudly, “We’ve already consummated the union.”

All eyes were on them as no one dared to ask the one question on the tip of everyone’s tongue. At last, Michael Engel managed to stammer out, “But...without a sharing of...um...it’s not necessarily binding...”

“There was sharing,” Castiel confirmed. There was a beat. “Dean came inside me.”

The room burst into giggles and gasps and Dean covered his eyes with his free hand. This was

mortifying.

“Good on ya, brother,” Benny murmured from the dais.

Dean groaned softly.

“Your petition is granted!” John Winchester shouted hastily.

“The two of you get out of here and get this thing legal!” Naomi said, sounding absolutely scandalized.

Dean lowered his hand and saw his mother smiling at him, though she did look a tad embarrassed. He glanced over at Castiel who looked utterly stoic after his announcement. He looked at Dean with a questioning face.

“What? You did.”

Dean grinned and pulled him close. “Yeah, I guess I did.”

He kissed Castiel in front of the whole town—taking the first step in unifying the Winchesters and the Engels. Two families that had been at each other’s throats for nearly two centuries—after Gabriel Engel had painted the Winchesters’ beloved horse pink.

3. Clashing Personalities – Cockles - Teen

Warnings: none

Jensen turned and gave a tight smile to the TMZ camera man as he followed him through the lobby of LAX.

“Jensen! Jensen!”

“Hey,” Jensen said, aiming for a polite brush off. It never worked with these guys, but it usually kept him from being skewered on the show for being an arrogant snob.

“So, there’s this new guitar on the market, that, like, can self tune. Like when it hears itself out of tune it corrects itself. Would you get one?”

Jensen was relieved the question this time was not about his personal life or whatever current scandal was going on. (He was extremely relieved those two things weren’t the same.) The inane, random questions he could deal with. He didn’t slow his stride, however, and saw Cliff thirty yards ahead of him, disappearing through the sliding doors that led outside to make sure the car service was on time.

“Um...” Jensen stalled. Twenty more yards. “That’s pretty impressive if an instrument can self tune.” Ten yards. “But...it seems like it takes the human element out of making music. And then, what’s the point?”

The camera man laughed as they walked through the doors. “Are you saying the current generation of pop starlets using autotune are pointless?”

Jensen gave him a wry smile, but wouldn't confirm, that yes that was exactly what he meant, and slid into the waiting car as Clif held the door open for him. The door shut firmly behind him and Clif was in the front passenger seat within seconds, giving directions to the driver. They pulled away from the curb and Jensen sighed in relief that he'd made it through the airport without being recognized until the TMZ guy had spotted him. He'd just come back from doing press in Brazil for the premiere of season two of *The Paranormal Files*, and the fans there had been out of control. He wasn't sure he'd fared better or worse than Ian who'd been sent to Asia.

Groaning slightly as his tired body ached from nearly twenty-four solid hours of being awake and traveling, he checked the time on his expensive wristwatch—a gift from an ex he didn't want to think about. He didn't even have a chance to recover from the jetlag or get some food before he had to go to a meeting with the writers and execs of his show. Why had he decided being a producer for their third season would be a good idea? Of course if he'd left Brazil on time, he would have had a day to recover. Instead the fans had stormed the hotel he'd been staying in and he'd been unable to make it to the airport before his flight had left. Apparently the situation didn't warrant the studio ponying up for a private jet and he'd had to skulk around the airport for almost five hours before getting a flight back to the States.

He startled awake when the car door opened and realized he'd dozed off for the drive to the studio offices. Even with traffic it had only taken thirty minutes, but he still felt better after getting a little shut eye. There had been a baby in coach class on his flight that had cried for seven solid hours, preventing him from sleeping in first class even with ear plugs, a blindfold, and two whiskey and Cokes in his system. He was never sitting that close to the dividing curtain again.

"If you don't mind," Clif said, "I'm going to go get some lunch, but I should be back before your meeting ends."

"That's fine," Jensen said, staving off a yawn. "In fact, I think I'll just call a service to take me home. That way you can go see to Padalecki's every need."

Clif raised an eyebrow at him, but Jensen ignored it. He knew that he was the one who had the reputation of being difficult to work with, and maybe he was a little, but in the case of Jared—dude was just a dick. And Ian was too laissez-faire about the job. And Danneel was too much of a perfectionist and wasted takes. And Nina was too meek. And Misha...

Jensen scowled as he made his way through the building to the Warner Brothers offices. The others at least he could put a fake smile on with in front of cameras or tolerate them at promotional shoots and events. But Misha...there were no redeeming qualities about him. Now that he was a producer, perhaps he would have the sway to get the guy fired and kill off his character. It's not like his character was all that important anyway.

However, as he sat down to his first meeting ever as a producer on *The Paranormal Files*, he figured he should probably not make any demands. Not yet any way. He could ease into it. For the most part the meeting went well as he was actively engaged by the others for his input. It was a good sign that they respected his opinion. Toward the end of the meeting, the show's creator—who had wavered about coming back for the third season—brought up a contentious subject.

"So," Eric began, "I know we like to focus on the lore and the legends and the friendships among our investigators, but I think it would help build the fan base more than alienate the one we already have to introduce a bit of a love story as well."

There were a couple groans around the table, but not nearly as many as had been voiced at the beginning of the second season when the idea had been broached—or at least that's what Jensen had heard.

“So, are you thinking of doing a Romeo and Juliet kind of thing?” Jeremy asked. “Make the new character a monster, but like a good one?”

“Maybe?”

“No, no,” Bob cut in. “We don’t have the budget to hire a new recurring character. And having someone show up twice a season is barely a love story. That’s why it won’t work. We should just forget the romance altogether.”

“Well what if you make the romance between two of the investigators?” Jensen suggested. “I mean, there’s enough interest for the will they/won’t they regarding a few pairings that we could drag it out a bit, but then have the pay off in time for spring sweeps.”

“But which two?” Jeremy asked. “There’s so much infighting within the fan base—we’ll never be able to make everyone happy.”

“Well, no matter what we do with the show we’ll never be able to make everyone happy,” Eric said. “Sheesh. Look what happened when we had Ian’s character finally find his courage and kill the big bad last season. Everyone complained that a ‘man had to save the girls.’ And ‘why couldn’t Nina’s or Danneel’s characters finally do something important?’ Also—our cast is entirely white. Need I remind you how well that’s currently going over?”

“Well, there’s an idea,” said Sara. “We could introduce a POC as a new love interest.”

“Can’t afford a new recurring character,” Bob said again with exasperation.

“Well, then we could go the LGBT route,” Sara tried again. “Have two of our investigators fall in love, but be of the same gender. There’s plenty of support for those pairings as well.”

“That could set us apart from the other genre shows currently airing,” Jensen chimed in. “Based on the feedback I get from attending conventions, it wouldn’t be unwelcome and possibly would bring in more viewers than we would potentially lose to traditionalist viewers. For one thing, the people who would stop watching a show because of LGBT content tend not to watch our kind of show anyway.”

“That could help us diversify a bit,” Bob said. “And if we put Nina’s and Danneel’s characters together, that’s less likely to drive people away because girl on girl isn’t gay, it’s just hot.”

Sara tsked. “You pig.”

“I’m just saying that’s what *other* people think.”

“Whatever.”

“No!”

Everyone started and turned to Jeremy. He had a dreamy, far-off look on his face.

“No...not Cassidy and Aislinn—their story doesn’t make sense. But...oh I can see it now! It’s perfect! It’s tragic, it’s beautiful, it’s heartfelt and gut wrenching. And it’s just as hot as Nina and Danneel making out.”

“Who?” Eric asked.

“Ezra and Jace.”

Jensen let out a snort of laughter and waited for the rest of the group to burst out laughing or tell Jeremy to stop being an idiot. He began to grow nervous as everyone appeared to actually be contemplating the idea.

“It could work,” Eric said, and Jensen whipped his head over to look at him.

“They do have all that tension on screen,” Sara said and Jensen’s head snapped in her direction.

“Tension and conflict that could easily result in a wild, wall slamming first kiss,” Jeremy sighed, apparently still lost in his own fantasy.

Jensen’s jaw nearly hit the table. He sputtered for a moment and turned to Singer. He was actually considering the idea.

“You all can’t be serious!” Jensen burst out. Everyone looked at him. “Ezra and Jace hate each other. And not in the mistaking loathing for love kind of way. Jace is responsible for Ezra’s parents’ deaths!”

“It was an accident,” Sara shrugged.

“There’s no basis for it! It’ll come out of nowhere!”

“No, trust me,” Jeremy said. “I know what to do. I can make it work. I’ll draw up an outline this weekend and submit it to the writers’ room for them to see if they can weave it into this year’s mythology. Then we can meet again and see how it will play out. I think it will be perfect.”

“Except for one thing!” Jensen tried desperately to get the group to stop thinking about Ezra and Jace turning all lovey-dovey and thus killing the show. “To do romance there has to be chemistry! The audience has to believe it. No one will believe Ezra and Jace are in love—Misha and I hate each other!”

“You hate everyone, Jensen,” Eric said dryly, “but you still manage to have good chemistry with them on screen.”

Everyone else chuckled and Jensen scowled. He didn’t hate *everybody*. Well, he didn’t *hate* everybody.

“It’s not guaranteed just yet we’ll go in that direction,” Bob said, “but I would suggest you start working through your issues with Misha. At least enough that you two will be able to behave like professional actors and do your fucking jobs.”

Jensen swallowed. He already had enough of a reputation as being “picky” and “difficult.” If “unprofessional” got added to the list he’d never get another job again. Plus there was the fact that more than likely the writers (who knew the characters better) would reject the Ezra/Jace love story and he would have nothing to worry about. So, he better play ball for now.

Jensen nodded his head. “Of course. Whatever’s best for the growth and *integrity* of the show.”

Jeremy beamed. “Trust me, Jensen. I won’t botch this. This will be...Epic.”

Jensen did his best to force a smile.

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Jensen sat on the information about the potential Ezra/Jace romantic storyline as long as he could. He saw no reason in riling up the other actors—and putting up with their bullshit teasing—unless

it was definitely going to happen. He actually put more effort into being friendlier and less judgmental of his costars. It resulted in learning that Jared actually wasn't as big of a dick as his persona made him seem, and he made a good drinking buddy. Ian was wickedly funny, when he wasn't being a lazy fucker on set. Nina apparently wasn't meek; she'd just been intimidated and shy around Jensen. Once he warmed up to her, her personality really came out and he found that he could actually enjoy her company and not just tolerate it. Danneel, well, to be honest he'd always liked her but an aborted attempt at dating during the first season left them with a stilted, awkward relationship at best, but it was getting easier. Misha—he didn't even bother to try. The guy was just a crazy ass fuckhead. No doubt about it.

The guy lived on nothing but kale, routinely sat around staring at walls (which he called “meditating”), and always had a comment about Jensen's clothing. Who was he to talk? He dressed like he shopped at Goodwill. And the fucker would never answer a question with a straight answer. He felt like he had to run a person around in circles before he finally gave an answer that was mostly bullshit, though still contained some speck of truth if you spent the time rooting through the crap to find it. But what bugged Jensen the most was that he appeared wild and spontaneous and bold—but he wasn't. He was quiet and pensive—and yet he had a switch that flipped him into something that made Jensen cringe and protect his balls whenever the man whirled across set. Jensen felt constantly on edge around him, never knowing if the real Misha was the snarky little shit he presented himself as, or the calm, retrospective thinker Jensen observed when Misha thought no one was looking. Either way he was obnoxious, so Jensen figured it didn't matter which one was real. He just needed to be avoided and ignored.

It seemed like his plan not to give his fellow actors a head's up about the Ezra/Jace thing had been a good one as he never heard any more about it during the planning stages over the summer. Then, after most of the season had been outlined, they'd received the first five scripts, and had already filmed the first episode—the script he'd been dreading landed in his hands.

The scene in question was both a surprise and somehow not a surprise at all. The first five scripts showed Ezra's and Jace's relationship deteriorating and becoming more volatile. It seemed like they had decided not to go the romance route at all, but then the scene in the fourth act of the sixth episode happened. Jace and Ezra had a wild fight—that resulted in them kissing and falling into bed together for some rough, angry sex. He knew for the most part the sex would be off screen, but it had still seemed surprising that it happened so quickly and suddenly. Until he thought about the fact that the other episodes had been ratcheting up the tension between the two characters on purpose.

Jensen clenched his fist around the script as he walked away from the studio offices. He was going to hide in his trailer until he was due on set. He knew he was going to have to deal with it eventually, but not today. As he passed by Craft Services, he saw Jared and Nina hunched over the table and giggling as they read something. They looked up, spotted Jensen, and burst out laughing.

“Laugh it up!” Jensen yelled at them. “I'm a producer now. I'll have you both fired.”

They just laughed harder and Jensen stomped his feet harder, feeling childish but also satisfied, as he thumped his way across the back lot. He was so busy plotting some kind of revenge (maybe braiding their hair together while they sat next to each other in their director's chairs) that he didn't notice someone was waiting for him at his trailer's door until he was practically on top of him. Jensen started as Misha waved the rolled up script in his face.

“Did you know about this?”

Jensen scowled and opened his trailer door, disappearing inside. He started when he realized Misha had followed him inside.

“There’s no way you couldn’t have. This would have been discussed in the exec meetings. A head’s up would have been nice, you self-absorbed asshat.”

“It was just an idea they tossed out. No one said it was definite. And they never discussed it again. As far as I knew the idea had been abandoned.”

Misha squinted his eyes at him for a moment, and then he sighed and flopped down onto Jensen’s couch. Jensen was scandalized.

“Make yourself at home,” Jensen snapped.

“Blow me, Ackles.”

Jensen stiffened at his words. He was not going to think about the most fucked up dream he’d ever had—two days after meeting Misha for the first time. It may or may not have involved looking up into a pair of bright blue eyes from about the level of someone’s lap. Then he’d discovered how much of a dick Misha was and that dream had thankfully never returned. But for some reason he couldn’t ever forget it either.

“Look. Obviously neither of us is happy about this, but there’s no point in making it worse than it has to be.”

Misha cocked his head and eyed Jensen curiously. Jensen shifted under his scrutiny.

“What?” he asked defensively.

“You’ve changed this year. You’re being, well, not nicer, but more open.”

Jensen shrugged. “Maybe I’m just tired of fighting a losing battle against idiocy. If you can’t beat ‘em...”

“Placate them with mildly friendly smiles until you can destroy them?”

Jensen rolled his eyes. “You’re such an ass. Always have to have a clever retort, don’t you?”

“And you’re just an ass.”

Jensen crossed his arms and they remained in silence for a very long minute. Then Misha shifted and looked uncertain—for perhaps the first time in his life.

“You know we’re going to have to practice this, right?”

Jensen tried to turn his surprise into a derisive scoff. “Are you joking? Why? Other than the fact that you want to disguise your clever plan to act on your sick obsession with me.”

Misha’s eye twitched, but he didn’t rise to the bait.

“I’m just saying, we can’t kiss for the first time on set. It will be a disaster. And one of us will wind up biting the other’s tongue off.”

“Fuck you. I wouldn’t tongue you.”

“Whatever, Jensen. We can’t have a kissing scene that leaves one of us bleeding. We need to just get the awkwardness and repugnance out of the way so that we can just go through the motions on set.”



“Go through the motions? Well, that will make for an epic love story for the ages on screen.”

“You have a better idea?” Misha practically growled.

“No. Fine. So. Do you...want to start practicing...um...now?”

“God, no. We can do it the week before this episode shoots. No sense in doing it sooner than we have to.”

“Good point. Good talk.” Jensen held open the trailer door. “Thanks for stopping by.”

Misha rolled his eyes, but levered himself off the couch and took his leave. Jensen slammed the door after him. Why hadn’t he put up more of a fight about this at that first meeting? Oh right, because people had called him unprofessional. Maybe he should show them what unprofessional really looked like and direct them toward Misha. What an ass.

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It was the week before they were to shoot 3x06; a Thursday to be precise. They’ put off their “practice session” as long as possible, due in no small part to the relentless teasing they’d had to put up with from their fellow cast mates and even some of the crew. They knew they were going to have to eventually just suck it up and get it over with. There was a possibility *that* scene would be the first thing they filmed on Monday morning. That’s why Jensen was pacing in his trailer while Misha glared at him from the couch so late on Thursday night it was almost Friday morning.

“Will you just sit the fuck down?” Misha griped. “It’s not a big deal if you don’t make it into one.”

“Oh, if *I* don’t make it into one.”

“Yes, you. I’m sitting here waiting to pucker up. So come on.”

Jensen stopped walking, closed his eyes, and inhaled deeply and exhaled slowly. He repeated the breathing exercises until his fists relaxed and his hands hung limply at his sides. He opened his eyes and saw Misha watching him dourly.

“Ready now, sweetheart?”

“Hey,” Jensen snapped. “You’re the one who said don’t make it harder than it has to be. Don’t be a jerk.”

Misha put his hands in the air in surrender. Then he smiled cheekily and patted the couch cushion next to him. Jensen rolled his eyes, but moved to sit on the couch. Misha eyed the three feet of distance between them.

“There something about your anatomy you haven’t shared with the class?” Misha asked dryly.

Jensen frowned, but scooted closer. He started when Misha got fed up and closed the distance for him. They were turned slightly to face each other, so their hips and thighs weren’t touching, but their knees were. Jensen looked at where they were touching. He made a face. Then he looked back at Misha. He nodded, indicating he was ready.

Misha raised a hand, but stopped before he touched Jensen’s face. He put it on his knee instead. They both looked at the hand and Misha withdrew it.

“Okay, just lean forward,” Misha said.

Jensen leaned forward and Misha met him halfway. Jensen squeezed his eyes shut and tried not to pinch his face in apprehension. Then he felt Misha's lips on his—like two cracked pieces of rubber. Oh that was unpleasant. He pulled back.

“Jesus. Haven't you ever heard of Chapstick?”

“Well, you're licking your lips enough for the both of us. Seriously. Stop it. You're getting your spit all over me.”

Jensen repressed his snide response and pushed forward to kiss Misha again. He kept leaning forward, but Misha kept retreating. Jensen felt like he was going to fall over, so he pulled back.

“Misha. Not helping.”

“Sorry, sorry. Your lips are just firmer than they look. It's weird.”

“Firmer—?! What? Shut up. Just, come here.”

They both leaned forward and pressed their lips together. This time they both stayed put. Neither moving. Jensen cracked an eye open. Misha's eyes were both open.

“We have to move right?” Misha's voice came out funny because his lips were still pressed against Jensen's.

“Well, we probably won't be able to get away with just this,” Jensen replied.

“Okay, go for it.”

“Close your eyes.”

“You close your eyes.”

Jensen groaned in annoyance, but shut his eyes and tilted his head. Their lips slotted together a little better. Misha moved his mouth and finally they shared what people might define as a kiss. They both turned their heads in the same direction and the awkward move made them break apart. Misha sighed.

“God. This shouldn't be this hard. It's just kissing.”

“Wanna try again?”

“Should we try open mouthed?”

Jensen made a face.

“Hey, look, I'm not thrilled with the idea either—”

“Sorry, sorry, I know,” Jensen said. “I wasn't making a face at you per se. Just the idea...I mean, that was a terrible kiss.”

“I know. I was there.”

Against his will, a small laugh escaped Jensen. “Okay. Let's go.”

They leaned in again, this time finding the correct angle for their lips on the first try. Jensen parted his lips ever so slightly, and his bottom lip fell between Misha's. It felt like when his nine month old niece mouthed at his finger. Gross. He needed to take control of this. He put a thumb and

finger on Misha's chin and forced his mouth open a little wider and then leaned in. For a moment there was an odd sensation zipping through his body as their mouths fit together perfectly. Then Misha pushed him away, spluttering and wiping his mouth.

"Dude! You said no tongue!"

"I didn't use tongue!"

Misha shuddered exaggeratedly.

"Fuck you, you big baby," Jensen huffed as he sat back against the couch.

"Damn it," Misha said in frustration. He leaned over Jensen, bracing his hand on Jensen's leg for balance. He kissed Jensen again and this time it was fairly normal. They kissed and used little technique, but did their best to extend the kiss as long as possible. Finally they both pulled back, feeling nothing but disappointed.

"Geez," said Misha once he was settled a foot away on the couch. "You'd think with how much we dislike each other at least some of that would come out. We're like two dead fish here."

"I know," Jensen sighed. "We're going to kill the show."

"We can't let that happen. This show is too good to die like that."

"Well, it's not *that* great of a show. But I agree. It shouldn't die because it looks like they tried to get ratings by making two guys mush their faces together."

"So, what should we do? Put peanut butter on the roofs of our mouths?"

Jensen laughed. "God, can you imagine if we kissed like that?"

Misha smiled. "I supposed horribly funny is better than uncomfortably awkward."

Jensen strummed his fingers on his thighs. He glanced at Misha.

"There's a meeting tomorrow. The execs are coming to the studio offices to have a discussion about casting some of the upcoming episodes locally. I could finagle us some time. I think if we—especially we two in particular—present a united front saying it just won't work...they'll have to reconsider and go in a different direction."

Misha tilted his head in thought. "You're right. I mean, what are they going to do? Fire us?"

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"You're fired."

Jensen's jaw dropped. "What?!"

"Wait, wait," Eric said, waving a calming hand at Bob. "We can counter."

"Counter with what?" Misha asked, looking alarmed.

"Do it, *or* you're fired. See? It's always better to give them a choice."

"You can't be serious," Jensen said. "You can't fire us. The show—"

"The show is starting to become stale because there's no peril," Sara said. "There's no suspense

because the audience knows no one is ever really in trouble. That's why we've decided to kill one of you off this season. No harm in making it two and getting some fresh faces."

"But, but..." Jensen looked around the table. "The whole premise of the show is based off of Ezra's mission to find out what happened to his family."

"And that was resolved last season," Sara said. "We've got new story lines and other characters to focus on. Frankly, Ezra's story has come to a natural conclusion. It makes sense to kill him off if we can't do something fresh with him."

"It'd be a shame to lose Jace," Jeremy said. "He is the most popular character with the online fan base."

Jensen glowered at Misha's smirk.

"But...no one is irreplaceable. And...I just love the idea of Ezra's and Jace's love story. Are you two sure you can't make it work?"

"We can read the lines and act it out," Misha said, "but like we told you earlier—we've tried rehearsing the scene. It's just not any good. There's none of the fire you're looking for, Jeremy."

"For crying out loud, you're actors!" Bob burst out. "In the first season you pretended to be afraid of butterflies, Jensen. Last season you cried over a tennis ball marker, Misha. You pretended those things in a reasonably believable manner! How hard is it to fake being turned on by someone! Just do it. Or neither of you are making it to the season finale."

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Misha face planted onto the couch in Jensen's trailer. He said something but it was muffled by the cushions. Jensen agreed with him anyway. He sat on the arm of the couch and crossed his arms.

"Any suggestions for how to make this work?" he asked.

Misha sat up. "We can think of somebody else? I could pretend you're...I don't know, Chris Evans?"

Jensen narrowed his eyes. "Chris Evans?"

"What? Who doesn't like Captain America? You wanna make out with Batman?"

Jensen made a face. "Imagine Affleck or Bale? No thank you."

"You could go old school with Keaton."

"I think I'd prefer to think you're a woman."

Misha shrugged a shoulder. "Fine. But think of a woman with broad shoulders."

Jensen snorted. Then let out a whining noise. "I don't wanna do this."

"Neither of us do. But let's face it, we're not so young anymore that we'd be guaranteed a new gig if we leave the show. Especially if it gets out that we were 'fired' for being 'uncooperative.'"

"Right." Jensen slapped his thighs and then stood up. "Stand up. Let's try it that way. That's what the scene calls for. Maybe it will be less weird."

Misha stood up and approached him. "Okay. So, nothing weird here. Just two guys—who have

learned to grudgingly trust each other over the past couple of years—survived the rising of ancient gods—who find each other in each other’s space more and more often—and just when they’re ready to throw the first punch—”

Jensen flinched as Misha moved in and kissed him. He stayed stock still as Misha gripped his biceps and tried to extend the kiss.

“Not helping,” Misha growled against his lips.

“Sorry.”

Jensen relaxed and put a hand on Misha’s waist. Then moved it to his shoulder. And then his back. He was so focused on where to put his hand that he was barely participating in the kiss. Misha pulled back in frustration.

“Man! Come on. I hate to admit it but I know you’re not *that* bad of a kisser. I’ve seen you kiss other actresses. Quit being a prude.”

“I’m not being a prude! I just have nothing to respond to!”

“Oh, you’re blaming this on *me*? At least I’m fucking trying. You’re just standing there like a cold fish.”

“Maybe I’m just mirroring what I’m getting. It’s not like you’re some hot blooded stallion igniting the passion in my loins.”

“Jesus Christ,” Misha groaned. “You’re impossible. Just get over your homophobic hang ups.”

Jensen felt his irritation burst into fury. “I am not homophobic! I’m bisexual, you know-it-all prick! *You’re* the one sending off ‘ew boy-kissing’ vibes.”

“The fuck? God, I can’t take this anymore. If I get fired because you can’t get your shit together —”

Jensen took a step forward, putting them nose to nose. “You’ll what?” he challenged.

“Get out of my face, Ackles.”

“Make me.”

Misha pushed him. Jensen was genuinely surprised that Misha had resorted to violence. Well, mild violence, but still.

“Did you just...”

Never mind what he just did. Jensen shoved him back. Misha stumbled into the table with a hard thwack as it didn’t give an inch since it was bolted to the floor. It was on the tip of Jensen’s tongue to ask if he was okay, but then Misha launched himself at him. There wasn’t a punch to ward off, but Jensen put his hands up anyway. They crashed into the wall next to the door, grappling and snarling at each other. It occurred to Jensen that crashing around the room like a couple of Neanderthals wasn’t the best way to handle this situation, but it sure did feel good to vent in some way. And Misha didn’t seem inclined to stop either.

He was going to have bruises on his hips from crashing into furniture, and he knew there was probably a scratch mark on Misha’s neck. There wouldn’t be any need to explain it all away; they were so totally getting fired after this. Jensen ducked out of an attempt by Misha to get him into a

headlock and threw his weight into Misha's body. They crashed against a wall and then all of his anger and frustration and irritation came pouring out of him. It was violent and messy and satisfying—and it took a good fifteen seconds for Jensen to realize that the release was coming in the form of knotting his hands in Misha's hair, holding his head in place, and kissing the everliving fuck out of him. He would have broken it off then, but his brain short circuited because Misha was kissing him back and geezusfuck it was like drowning in an incubus' embrace.

The passion calmed in a natural progression—they began to use less teeth and more tongue. They slightly eased their grips on each other's bodies. And then their lips eased back to lay small, gentle kisses on each other—both sensitive from the abuse they'd just undergone. At last they stopped entirely, foreheads pressed together, sharing breath as their chests heaved with the exertion.

Jensen opened his eyes and did his best to focus on Misha's blue eyes with the proximity making him go slightly cross-eyed. He swallowed thickly.

"Oh," he said dumbly.

Misha shifted his hips, ever so slightly, and they were both made aware of how their lower halves were pressed together—and their cocks were hard and aching between them.

"Oh," Misha echoed.

"Well. This makes a lot things..."

"Make a lot more sense now."

Jensen closed his eyes and dove back in for another kiss. A kiss that now felt natural and thrilling and easy and exciting. Because he was kissing Misha—a man he realized he didn't hate or envy for his brave and adventuresome nature, but one he had admired. A man whose quiet repose hadn't bothered him because it was pretentious, but had inspired self-reflection.

"Misha..." Jensen breathed as his costar kissed a hot trail down his jaw.

When Misha stepped forward, Jensen willingly let himself be guided to the bed in the backend of the trailer. They fell onto the mattress, hands roaming, lips exploring, confessions whispered that would probably be a little embarrassing in the morning.

Jensen thought it was funny—they had never shared a nice word or pleasant interaction in the two and a half years they'd known each other, but it made perfect sense that their first time together wasn't hate sex—they were making love.

Just like Ezra and Jace.

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Jensen tried to ignore the fact that there were a ton of people on set. Crew members and even cast members who had no business being there had showed up for The Scene. He repressed an annoyed sigh and glanced at Misha. He looked like he always did before scenes—kind of like he was constipated. But his eyes caught Jensen's for a brief moment and he gave him a wink. Jensen dropped his head and rolled in his lips to hide his smile. Everyone was going to be in for a surprise. He and Misha had rehearsed this scene over and over again all weekend; they'd had no problem recreating the passion and heat. They just had problems stopping.

"Okay," the director called out. "We're going to take it from 'Because of you' and the first push. Places."

“Quiet on set!” someone called out. The chatter died down.

“Roll film. And...action!”

“Because of you!” Jensen screamed as Ezra, blaming Jace for his parents’ deaths. He shoved Misha against a cracked wall in the safe house in which they were hiding.

“I did everything I could!” Misha yelled back as Jace, pushing Ezra away. “The house was cursed! I told them to stay out!”

“You could have waited until they were out!”

The two of them grappled and slammed into another wall.

“They went back in for *you*! They thought *you* were in there! Just like when the portal collapsed in Savannah!”

“Not Savannah again!” Ezra took a swing at Jace and wound up thrown against a wall for his troubles.

“Yes, Savannah! Because you think it’s about Elia! It’s not about Elia! It never was! It’s you, Ezra! For God’s sake, it’s you.”

Ezra went still, his eyes wide as he focused on Jace.

“It’s always you,” Jace said sadly.

For a moment, Ezra’s anger wavered. Then his eyes hardened.

“Don’t blame me for your shortcomings! Don’t blame me for—”

Ezra stopped talking when Jace kissed him. He stopped thinking, and kissed back. Almost immediately, Ezra was gone and Jensen clawed at the slippery jacket on Misha’s back. Misha growled and trapped Jensen’s lower lip between his teeth. Jensen sucked in a breath as the pleasurable pain burst over him, shooting straight to his cock. He shoved the jacket off Misha’s shoulders and slipped his hands under the T-shirt. They both groaned as they made skin to skin contact and Misha shoved Jensen against the wall hard. Jensen let out a desperate whimper as Misha’s thigh pushed his legs apart and collided with his groin. He undulated his hips, rubbing his erection against Misha’s leg and let out hungry moans as he kissed and sucked Misha’s lips and tongue. Jensen’s billowing coat hit the floor and they continued the wild dance of their bodies against the wall, waiting for the director to yell cut. The scene was supposed to move to the bed now.

Jensen and Misha continued to make out, trying not to hump themselves to an orgasm before the scene ended, but things were starting to get a little desperate. Misha pulled his lips away and put his face next to Jensen’s ear. Without Misha’s lips to muffle them, Jensen’s moans were now louder and dirtier and punched out of him each time Misha’s hips bucked up into his.

“Jen—Jensen,” Misha whispered in his ear. “We gotta, we gotta stop or I’m gonna—”

Jensen whimpered, unable to answer without the camera seeing him talk or pick up his words with the boom mike. But he knew exactly what Misha’s problem was. Fuck, he was right there. All he needed was a few more good rubs and he’d be flying.

Misha abruptly stopped moving and pulled back slightly, resting his head on Jensen’s shoulder.

Jensen could tell he was gritting his teeth in a desperate bid for control. Jensen exhaled with disappointment and relief. They looked up and noticed everyone on set was staring at them with glazed eyes and parted lips. The tension in the air was palpable. Then the director twitched violently.

“Oh! Cut! Cut!”

The tension snapped and everyone began moving or faking having something to do, some even giggling nervously.

“Okay. So. I think one angle of that is fine. And that was a good take.”

“A great take,” the camera operator uttered.

“Right. So, we’ll move on to. Um.” The director swallowed. “To the bedroom scene. Um. But, who needs a break? Anyone? Okay. Let’s take what, ten minutes should do it? Okay. Good work team. Back in ten.”

Most everyone bolted from the set, some walking a little awkwardly. Jensen and Misha stared as almost everyone cleared the room. Then they looked at each other in bewilderment. Misha laughed first and leaned his forehead against Jensen’s.

“That’s all for you, babe.”

“What?” Jensen huffed in embarrassment.

“All those pretty noises,” Misha murmured, nosing at Jensen’s neck.

“Shut up,” Jensen grouched, but hugged Misha tightly around the neck. “You’re the one who’s out of character.”

Misha laughed. “How so?”

“Jace is a paradigm of control and rationality. This wildness is all you.”

“Maybe Ezra just brings out the animal in him.”

“That’s so corny.”

“Hmm. But Jensen likes the wildness, right?”

“That’s irrelevant.”

Misha laughed again and pulled out of the hug to kiss Jensen. Jensen gave into it for a few moments, but then pulled back.

“Hey, we still have eight minutes. Should we...” he rocked his hips into Misha’s where their erections were still pressed together, though the urgency had passed. “You know, so we can be in better control for the next scene.”

“No way,” Misha grinned. “Seeing everyone squirm is way too much fun.”

“You’re despicable,” Jensen said fondly.

“Kiss me anyway,” Misha replied.

“Always have to have a clever retort,” Jensen murmured as they drew closer together.



“Such an ass,” Misha grinned, and kissed him.

# Friends to Lovers

## Friends to Lovers

1. Childhood Friends - Cockles - General Audiences
2. Meet in College, Become Friends, Realize it's Something More - Destiel - Teen
3. Crush on Friend's Sibling - Mature

### 1. Childhood Friends – Cockles – General Audiences

*Warnings: mild bullying*

Josh was two grades above Jensen, which meant he was going to junior high school now. Mackenzie was in preschool, so that meant she had to ride the bus to school. Plus, she only had a half day. That meant Jensen would have to walk to and from school by himself. But he was in fourth grade—he was already ten years old. He was more than old enough to walk by himself. It took his father finally overruling his mother before she relented and agreed to it. He promised to obey the safety patrols and cross only at the street corners. He promised never to dawdle or change routes or go home with a friend without permission first. He was finally being treated like a big boy. Which is why he felt confident in taking a different route home on the third day.

His mother would never know. It was a shortcut after all. If he walked through the woods behind his school, it came out on the sidewalk that ran next to the school behind his. The one that had very loud shouting coming from it during recess. The one where the young kids and old kids went together. Jensen was curious what kind of school it was and he thought he might get a clue if he walked by it.

Disappointingly, it just looked like a long, two story brick building with a playground at the backend and a blacktop with a couple of basketball hoops. It looked like what all schools looked like. Rather than continue onto the street that would cross with the street he lived on, he decided to detour around to the front to look at the sign with the name. His school had a sign out front; he bet this one did too.

As he walked along the side of the building that faced the woods, he saw two kids harassing a smaller one. The kids looked to be about his age. He wasn't afraid of them. His father taught him that most of the time when someone stood up to a bully, they were so surprised that they backed down. So, Jensen strode purposefully and confidently over to the scuffle.

“Hey!” he yelled.

The two bullies looked up, but the victim remained hunched with his back to Jensen. His hands were over his ears like he was protecting them.

“What do you want, pukeface?” one of the boys growled.

“To kick your teeth in,” Jensen replied.

The boy looked surprised by the calm threat of violence.

“You think you can take us?” the second sneered, though his voice was shaky.

“Do you think you can take me?” Jensen asked.

He was no bigger or smaller than the bullies, and there were two of them and only one of him, but they hedged their bets and released the small kid. They stepped backwards, watching Jensen carefully.

“You’ll be sorry,” one tossed out half-heartedly.

Jensen snorted and ignored him. He stopped a couple feet from the cowering kid who was facing away from him.

“Hey, they’re gone. You can relax now.”

The kid raised his head and watched the bullies disappear around the side of the building.

“Don’t worry about them. They’re cowards. They won’t come back.”

The kid didn’t respond and bent over to pick up a couple of books and brushed them off. Jensen frowned.

“Hey, are you just going to ignore me? How about thanking me for saving your butt?”

The kid started to walk away.

“Hey!”

Jensen reached forward and grabbed the kid’s shoulder. He started violently, dropping his books again as he whirled around. His eyes were wide with fear and Jensen stepped back with his hands in the air.

“Whoa. Relax. I’m not going to do anything. I saved you, remember?” The kid cocked his head. “I didn’t save you just so that I could torture you. You don’t have to be such a jerk about it.”

Jensen stared at the kid in consternation. He had a pudgy face and messy hair. He was wearing plaid pants, galoshes, and a weird wrap that looked more like a shawl than a coat. He was a total weirdo. His eyes were very blue.

“Whatever,” Jensen muttered and moved to step around him and go home.

The kid put out a hand and stopped his departure. He made a gesture with his hand. Jensen just looked at him. He didn’t know what the kid was doing. Then the kid stood up a little straighter and spoke haltingly. It took a moment for Jensen to process that he’d said “thank you,” though it had sounded weird.

“You’re welcome. Will you be okay to get home?”

The kid squinted and it made Jensen smile because he looked like a confused kitten. Then the kid shook his head and pointed at the side of his head. Jensen raised his eyebrows.

“What? Is something hurt?”

The kid looked like he was concentrating on Jensen's face really hard. Finally he shook his head again and pointed at his ear. He tugged on it, and then shook his head.

"I don't get it," Jensen said slowly and exaggeratedly. "Is there something wrong with your head? Do your ears hurt?"

The kid made a face and then made several gestures with his hands. Jensen didn't know what it meant, but he'd seen it before. It was like in third grade when they'd learned the alphabet in sign language. Understanding finally dawned on Jensen.

"You're deaf," he said softly.

The kid nodded.

"Is that why those kids were picking on you? Oh, geez, sorry. You can't hear me. Why am I asking you something when you can't hear me?"

The kid put a hand on Jensen's forearm to end his embarrassed rambling before it really began. Then he patted his chest and quickly spelled out his name.

"Mee-sa," the boy said.

Jensen realized it was his name, and indicated for him to spell it again. His name was Misha; Jensen noticed he had problems pronouncing "sh" sounds. He sorted through his memories and managed to remember the signs for the letters of his name.

"Jensen," Misha said, his J sounding a bit like it had a D in front of it.

Jensen nodded and smiled. "Nice to meet you."

Misha smiled and signed something back at him.

"So, uh, are you okay to get home? Want me to walk with you in case they're waiting?"

Misha's brows drew together and he looked a little frustrated. He closed his eyes, tugged on his earlobes, and shook his head. He let out a sharp growl.

Jensen put a hand on his shoulder and Misha opened his eyes.

"It's okay," Jensen said. He shrugged. "It's okay."

Misha nodded. Jensen bent over and picked up Misha's books. He handed them to him and then tilted his head in a "shall we?" gesture. Misha's smile came out again and it made Jensen feel a little happy to see it for some reason. They fell into step together and Jensen started when he felt Misha slip his hand into his.

"What are you doing?" he asked, almost in a panic, but Misha was facing forward and didn't hear him or see his reaction. He just kept smiling. Jensen's eyes darted around as they came out to the sidewalk. No one was around, and Misha looked happy. Jensen didn't want to make him upset again. So, he let Misha hold his hand all the way back to Misha's house. He lived in the same neighborhood as Jensen, but several streets away. He was going to be late getting home, but his mother would have to forgive him. He'd saved a deaf kid after all.

Misha waved goodbye to him as he unlocked the front door of his house. He signed something, but Jensen just waved back. He hoped Misha wasn't going to have any more encounters with bullies. Jensen knew he was going to need to start taking the regular way home again. Of course,

he went through the woods again the next day, and the one after that. Misha always waited for him on the sidewalk, and they walked to the street where their paths diverged.

Jensen talked a lot about his new Ninja Turtles action figures and his favorite TV shows and how his little sister was annoying and his brother was so cool and on the junior varsity basketball team. Misha talked a lot with his hands too, but Jensen never knew what he was saying. Misha tried to learn to read lips, but it was hard to do while they were walking. Jensen tried to learn sign language from Misha, but it was hard when he didn't always know what each sign stood for. After about a month of one sided conversations on both their parts, Jensen dropped his backpack on the foyer when he got home and ran into the kitchen to find his mother.

"Hey, mom!"

"Jensen, please don't run. Or yell. What is it?"

"You know how you let Josh do batting cages and Mackenzie take ballet lessons and you said when I decided I wanted to do something, you and dad would buy lessons for me too?"

His mother smiled and combed her fingers through his hair. Jensen tilted his head to get away from the touch.

"*Mom.*"

"Sorry. Yes, I remember. What kind of lessons would you like?"

Jensen beamed at his mother. "I want to learn sign language."

It took a few days to convince his parents that yes, he really did want to learn sign language, but eventually they relented and were able to get him enrolled in a beginner level class at the Boys and Girls Club. He kept his lessons a secret from Misha for a few weeks, until he felt confident in his signing.

One day just before they parted ways, Jensen stopped Misha and made them face each other. He was feeling pretty smug that he'd recognized a few words while Misha had been talking. It seemed like he'd been talking about apples and tree climbing. Maybe. Misha tilted his head at Jensen in confusion as Jensen just smiled at him.

**-My name is Jensen. It's nice to meet you. I want to be friends.-**

Misha stared at him and Jensen wondered if he'd completely screwed up his signing to something nonsensical. Then a huge grin broke out on Misha's face and leapt forward to hug Jensen. Jensen staggered a little from the sudden onslaught, but he laughed and hugged his friend back. Then Misha pulled back and started signing rapidly. Jensen put out his hands.

**-Slowly.-**

Misha nodded and signed **-Thank you.-**

Jensen ducked his head and scuffed his shoe. "It's nothing," he mumbled.

He looked up when Misha tugged on his sleeve for his attention.

**-Your name.-**

Jensen cocked his head, confused. But he spelled it out for Misha. Misha smiled and put his open hands near his shoulders, then moved them forward in a strong gesture, making a fist with one

hand the J symbol with the other. **-Your name.-** He repeated the new sign again.

“What does that mean?” Jensen asked.

Misha didn't look upset or frustrated. He just pulled his backpack off his shoulders and dug out a notebook and pencil. He scribbled down several sentences and then handed it to Jensen to read.

*It's your name sign. We create name signs so we don't have to spell it out all the time. Only a Deaf person can give you a name sign. I'm giving you yours.*

Jensen looked up, grinning. “Cool. What's yours?” **-What is your name?-**

Misha made the letter M and then placed his hand at his brow. He made two motions outward. He took the notebook and wrote down an explanation.

*It's the sign for “creative” using the letter M.*

Jensen laughed. “Is that a nice way of saying you're a liar?”

Misha tilted his head in question. He tapped the notebook. Jensen shook his head.

“Never mind. Dumb joke. What does my name sign mean?” He pointed to the word name sign on the notepad and then Misha's explanation of his own name sign. Misha blushed slightly and hesitated.

“What? Is it something bad?” **-Bad?-**

Misha shook his head vigorously. He took the notepad and wrote something down. Jensen's face blazed to an inhuman temperature when he read, *It's a J for your name and the sign for “brave.”* His fingers clenched around the notebook and he had to force himself to look up. Misha stood still, his own cheeks fairly pink in the balmy October afternoon. Jensen cleared his throat and tucked the notebook under his arm to free up his hands.

**-Friends?-**

Misha smiled.

**-Friends.-**

~~Nine Years later~~

Jensen spotted Misha sitting in a booth with their other friends across the student union. He waved to him and started to make his way over. Misha had had a long trying week and they were all trying to cheer him up. After two years at a hearing university, Misha still had a lot of setbacks to overcome and ignorance to put up with. Even though it was the law, some of his teachers balked at the idea of accommodating a deaf student and it was nearly impossible to find an interpreter whenever he needed to deal with administrative issues; Jensen just couldn't always be around.

Those were some of the reasons Misha's parents had been furious that he'd decided not to go to Gallaudet University. Jensen would have gladly gone to Gallaudet with Misha, but the only degree offered to hearing students was a BA in Interpretation. While he would have been happy to earn that degree as long as he was with Misha, his friend had convinced him that in the long run he would regret not studying something in which he had a bigger interest. Plus, Gallaudet didn't have a football team. So, they'd both applied and been accepted to UCLA, their junior year finding Jensen declared as a sports medicine major and Misha doubling in sociology and political

theory.

They'd developed a tight knit group of friends that actually came more from Jensen's affiliations with intramurals sports than it did the other members of the Deaf community at school or the ASL Club. Misha had become adept at figuring out their friends' weird charades style of signing, but Jensen could always tell how relieved he was when he could turn to Jensen and hold a normal conversation. Their friends always accused them of plotting world domination since neither spoke out loud when they signed to each other. Misha had tried speech therapy in middle school, but he'd given up and stubbornly refused to attempt talking all through high school. He'd been a little less rigid since they had gotten to college, but for the most part, Misha was silent. Except when he laughed. Jensen made it his mission in life to make Misha laugh. He liked his voice.

He also made it his mission to be out of the dorms when Misha had sex. He knew it was kind of mean to joke about it, but deaf people were incredibly loud when they had sex—they had no reason to hold back how good it felt. It wasn't that Jensen was embarrassed to admit he knew the guy when other people raised eyebrows when they heard the noises coming from their shared room, it was something else that Jensen wasn't quite comfortable with admitting. It wasn't just Misha's laugh he liked to hear after all.

Jensen slid into the horseshoe shaped booth next to Misha, tapping his hand just below his eye with the sign for the letter "B" and then making the sign for blue. It was a bastardized sign Jensen had made up to mean "Blue Eyes" when they were in eighth grade. Misha had eventually stopped rolling his eyes at it, which was a good thing because Jensen used it almost exclusively instead of Misha's name sign. (He only used his "official" name sign around Misha's parents.) Jensen thought it was only fair he modified Misha's name since Misha could hardly ever be bothered to use his full name sign after their first year as friends. He'd gotten lazy after that and mostly just made a sloppy J at his shoulder and swung his hand down.

**-What's up?-** Jensen asked.

**-Bad news.-** he replied. He let out a huff of air and glared at their other four friends in the booth.

"What?" Jared asked, using his "I'm totally innocent" face which was always a dead giveaway that he definitely was not innocent. "You guys said you'd been slammed lately and needed a break."

"What did you guys do?"

Jared, his girlfriend Gen, and their other two friends Rob and Matt looked up at the ceiling, feigning ignorance. Jensen frowned at them, and then turned to Misha.

**-What is it?-**

**-They're setting us up.-**

Jensen blushed. **-With each other?-**

Misha laughed softly. **-No, silly. With them I'm guessing.-**

Jensen turned just as two people approached the booth. One was a gorgeous redhead and the other was some douche-y looking guy wearing skinny jeans and a scarf in fucking California.

"You made it!" Jared called out to the duo. He shoved on Misha's shoulder to push into Jensen so that they were forced to move out of the booth. Everyone slid out so that introductions could be made. Jensen suspected they had only done it so that they could be rearranged back in the booth

so that Jensen was sitting next to the pretty redhead, Danneel, and Misha was next to the hipster, Gil. Who the fuck was even named Gil? Gil was a name for old men fishing on a pier, not pretty boy hipsters with nice smiles.

For the next hour, Jensen found himself partially listening to Danneel and mostly trying to integrate himself into Gil's and Misha's conversation. Misha was having a hard time reading his lips—he'd never gotten very good at it—and Gil didn't know a lick of sign language. Jared kicked his foot under the table at one point, giving him a look that told him to pay attention to his own date. He did try. Danneel was gorgeous after all and had a pretty twisted sense of humor, but he was distracted. He was protective of Misha, always had been, and this smooth talking douche nozzle was sidled right up next to Misha, his arm slung over the back of the booth behind Misha's head like he was the first genius to ever think of that move. Asshat.

It was obvious the guy was a poser. So why did Misha keep smiling at him like he was clever or amusing? He must be faking it pretty hard right now. It was time to stage a rescue mission.

"Anyone need a refill?" Jensen asked, also signing for Misha's benefit.

Hands went up around the board.

"Just get another pitcher," Gen said.

"And some popcorn chicken and ranch," Rob said.

"And cheesy fries," Matt added.

"Probably two pitchers," Jared amended.

Jensen slid out of the booth and signed to Misha to help him. He started to slide out and Danneel had to move to let him out.

"I could help," Danneel said to Jensen.

"I couldn't ask a lady to do that. No worries. We'll be back in a flash. Everything on your tab, right, Jared?"

"Fuck you, Ackles!"

Jensen laughed and grabbed Misha by the elbow, leading him over to the counter.

**-Do you want to get out of here? We can totally bail.-** Jensen signed once their backs were turned. Rob's signing skills were getting better every day.

**-Is that why you dragged me over here? For a secret discussion? We could do that at the table. No one else signs well enough.-**

**-Rob is getting better.-**

**-True. But he can't follow when we sign fast.-**

Jensen shrugged and placed their order with the guy working the food counter. Misha tapped his shoulder and Jensen turned to face him.

**-Do you want to leave?-**

Jensen shrugged. **-I'm fine. I just thought the hipster might be bothering you.-**



**-That's not the sign for hipster.-** Misha said with a slightly scolding look.

Jensen smiled. **-Fine. Gil. Is he bothering you?-**

**-No.-** Misha cocked his head. **-Is he bothering you?-**

"No," Jensen said petulantly.

**-Danneel seems nice.-**

**-She is.-**

**-She's pretty.-**

**-If you like redheads.-**

**-Which you do.-**

Jensen huffed and leaned on the counter. Misha tugged on his shoulder, but Jensen wouldn't turn to look at him. He knew it was a total dick move. But it was no worse than when Misha closed his eyes in order to ignore him. Misha tugged at him more insistently. Jensen turned to look at him with a scowl.

"What?"

**-Why are you in such a bad mood?-**

"I'm not."

**-Why aren't you signing?-**

"You don't seem to care that Gil isn't signing."

Misha's brows creased as he tried to process that. When he did a look of supreme annoyance flashed over his features.

**-He doesn't know how to sign.-**

"And that makes it okay?"

**-Makes what okay? Sign, damn it!-**

**-No.-**

**-You're such a child.-**

**-Better than being a hipster douche.-**

Jensen picked up the two pitchers of beer placed on the counter and left Misha to carry the chicken and fries. He made his way over to the table and set the pitchers in the center. He turned to Danneel and smiled at her, putting out a hand to keep her from standing up.

"It's okay. I—I can't stay."

"Why not?" Jared demanded.

"I just remembered that I have a paper due on Monday. I haven't even started on it. I'm so dead if I don't get on it right now."

"For what class?" Jared asked suspiciously.

"Econ. It was nice meeting you, Danneel. Gil. Sorry your set up turned out to be such a bust."

Gil's jaw dropped open in surprise.

"Maybe we can do this again sometime without the asshole."

Jensen turned and threaded his way through the crowded room and out the exit. He thrust his hands into his pockets as he began his long trek across campus to the upper classman dorms. He'd leave for the car for Misha. He had the keys anyway.

Suddenly, a hand gripped his shoulder and spun him around so fast he nearly did a three-sixty as he lost his balance. The only thing that kept him from falling onto his ass was Misha's other hand steadying him. Then he released him to have both hands free. His signing was hard and fast and angry.

**-What the fuck, J? You were unforgivably rude! Jared told me what you said to Gil. How dare you?!-**

**-How dare I what? Call him out for being an asshole?-**

**-What the fuck did he do to you?-**

**-Nothing. But I heard him. While you were talking with Gen, he turned to Danneel and said he couldn't understand a word you were saying. He was making fun of your voice!-**

**-Saying he can't understand me isn't the same thing as making fun of it. He never said anything about it to me. All he did was act pleasant and interested and friendly the whole time! You're the one with all these hang ups about people caring how I sound. I never cared! I stopped speaking in high school because it made *you* so uncomfortable when people teased me for the way I sounded!-**

Jensen took a step back, completely floored. He felt sick.

**-You stopped speech therapy...because of me?-**

Misha's anger melted away. **-No. No...I...-** His brow creased. **-Why does it bother you so much? That I have a hard time with some people? It's *my* problem. Why does it bother you so much more than it bothers me?-**

"Because..." **-Because you're so much more than your Deafness. You're kind and patient and you care so much about everyone and everything. Because you pick up worms off the sidewalk and put them back in the grass—after wearing them like fucking wormstaches. Because you have a wicked sense of humor. Because you're loyal and weird and like having tea parties with stuffed animals when you're fucking twenty years old. Because you're smart and witty and you don't take other people's shit—you just ball it up and throw it right back at them. Because—you're beautiful. You are beautiful. And you're sexy and your eyes are the most gorgeous pair of eyes I've ever seen in my life. And your ears are adorable. They're cute and perfect. And all anyone can ever focus on is how**

**they're defective. They're not defective! Why can't anyone see that?-**

Jensen lowered his arms. He almost felt winded from how quickly and vehemently he'd been signing. Misha was staring at him, looking slightly terrified. Jensen knew he'd been harboring these feelings for a long time, but he'd been too scared to ruin his friendship with Misha to act on them. He couldn't take any of it back now; he might as well deliver the last truth.

"Misha..." He used his name sign. **-I love-**

Misha closed his eyes. Jensen felt his heart shatter in his chest.

"No, Misha, don't shut me out." Jensen inhaled sharply. "Please, at least let me say it before you reject me." Jensen grabbed Misha's shoulders and shook him. "Listen to me!"

Misha kept his eyes closed tight.

"Misha..."

Jensen swallowed the lump in his throat and knew the tears wavering in his eyes were about to spill out. He leaned forward and pressed his lips to Misha's. His friend stiffened.

"I love you," he said slowly and with articulation, certain that Misha would be able to feel the movements on his own lips.

He pulled back, feeling the shards of his heart stabbing down into his stomach, making him feel nauseated. He lifted his eyes from the sidewalk to find Misha's blue eyes open and staring at him. Jensen froze, unsure of what to do. Misha slowly raised his arms and gently removed Jensen's hands from his shoulders. With his arms freed, Misha simply signed, **-I love you too.-**

Jensen didn't dare to breathe as he stared at his friend.

"Do you mean it?" he whispered. "You're not just saying it because you feel sorry for me or something?"

Misha leaned forward and kissed him. He slid his hands around Jensen's neck and pulled him closer. Finally released from the trance of his own making, Jensen wrapped his arms around Misha's waist and kissed him hard and longingly—making up for at least three (if not nine) years of repressed feelings. Then he pulled back and nudged Misha far enough away that they could sign.

**-If you knew I was saying I love you, and you love me too, why did you shut me out?-**

Misha smiled sheepishly. **-I thought I was dreaming. I didn't want to wake up.-**

Jensen laughed and shook his head. Then he made the first (unofficial) sign he'd ever learned.

**-Loser.-**

## **2. Just Met/Friendship Develops – Destiel – General Audiences**

*Warnings: Castiel/Gadreel*

“Cas, let’s go!”

Castiel sighed and rolled his eyes up so hard he was pretty certain he saw the inside of his skull. He tapped his highlighter on his textbook and counted to five (he couldn’t make it to ten) before he answered.

“I told you I didn’t want to go, Zeke,” Castiel called out, hoping that would be the end of it.

He heard footsteps coming down the hallway toward his dorm room. His boyfriend popped his head inside the open door and frowned at him.

“Come on, man, you know this isn’t optional for me. You said you’d go for moral support.”

Cas sagged. “But this is so stupid. Why would the basketball team haze its new members by making them go to a frat party?”

“It’s not a frat party. It’s a basketball team party. Seriously, it’s not going to be that bad.”

“No shit,” Castiel’s roommate murmured. “Like a mostly white basketball team at a Division III school is going to get into any trouble.”

“Shut up, Ion,” Castiel and Zeke said together.

Zeke gave him a look and pressed his lips together. He wasn’t very good at making puppy dog eyes, but he could outstare anyone—even Castiel. Sighing again, Cas shut his textbook and tossed it on the bed behind him as he stood up. He picked up his wallet from the dresser and started for the door.

“Are you going to wear that?” Zeke asked.

Cas looked down. He was wearing jeans and an AC/DC T-shirt. He looked up at his boyfriend. He must actually be freaked about this party if he gave two shits about what Castiel was wearing.

“What would you like me to wear?”

Zeke shook his head. “It’s fine. You’re fine.”

Cas used every ounce of willpower he had not to sigh or roll his eyes again. He turned and walked over to the drab, school-provided wardrobe on wheels that housed what little clothing wasn’t stuffed in the dresser or currently living in a laundry basket. He swiftly swapped out the T-shirt and jeans for a tailored dark blue button down and a pair of tight, black jeans. He turned back to Zeke and held his arms out. His boyfriend smiled and glanced over at Ion who had put on his headphones.

“Not so sure I want to go to the party anymore,” he said with the mildest of leers. Which for Zeke—was just downright dirty.

Cas laughed softly and picked up his wallet again. “Let’s go, Mister Basketball Star. We have an appearance to make.”

Zeke briefly put a hand on the small of his back to usher him out of the room, and that brazen display of PDA was probably all Cas would get for the night. He might be able to finagle a goodnight kiss from him later, but only if Ion was gone or he could plant one on his boyfriend before he realized they were standing in an empty hallway. Castiel seriously wondered if Zeke’s

upbringing wasn't so much "extremely religious" as it was simply abusive. The poor guy was tortured enough with a name like Ezekiel—which already was the middle name he chose to go by rather than his given name, Gadreel—what did they do to him that he grew faint at the thought of being affectionate in public? And yet—that same family was perfectly okay with the fact that he was dating a dude. If they ever got married, they were never doing any holidays with Zeke's family.

Despite the party not being a "frat party" it was being held in the house that the senior members of the basketball team lived in—which was on frat row. The sounds—loud music, drunken shouting, and the occasional crashing furniture—that came out of the basketball team party soundly suspiciously like those emanating from the nearby frat houses. Castiel stopped in his tracks. Zeke pulled him forward by the elbow.

"Don't fail me now, Cas. I'm not allowed to come alone."

"You could have brought Abner," Cas grouched.

Zeke gave him a look as he tugged him gently up the stairs to the front door. "Yeah, because when you saw us having coffee together the other day you were totally cool with it."

Cas repeated "totally cool with it" in a high-pitched, mocking voice—because he had no defense. He'd been a total ass about "catching" his boyfriend having a "lunch date" with his ex-boyfriend. He was still grumbling to himself about whether he was more upset at Zeke for seeing his ex or himself for overreacting like a crazy bitch when they stopped in front of the door. Zeke raised a hand to knock, but it swung in suddenly. Loud cheers erupted and Zeke was pulled into the house. Cas was grabbed and yanked inside as well, the door slamming shut behind them.

"What are you—" Cas managed to get out as he saw the team doing something to Zeke's wrist before he realized his own arm was still under someone else's control. He turned to look at a tall guy—okay, everyone in the room was tall—as he held Cas' wrist against somebody else's.

"So glad you showed up, Zeke," someone was saying. "Poor Dean and Benny have been waiting for like fifteen minutes."

"Without drinks I might add," someone with a beard drawled testily.

"Rules are rules!"

Cas' attention turned back to his arm when he felt something tight choke up on his wrist.

"Ow." He tried to pull his arm back, but brought the arm of somebody else with him. He realized Tall Guy #84 had zip tied his wrist to someone else's. He raised his eyes and saw the profile of a good looking man grinning broadly as he eyed the keg in the next room.

"Finally," he said and took off, dragging Castiel after him.

Cas turned and frantically sought out Zeke—he was being zip tied to a girl who had just come inside while her escort was tied off to Beard Guy. Zeke gave him a wave with his free hand and smiled sheepishly. Cas scowled. Zeke had known this was coming.

Cas stumbled into the side of his fellow hostage as he came to a stop at the keg.

"Whoa," the guy said as he steadied him. "You start the party before you came?"

"How could I possibly do that?" Cas ground out, still pissed he was skipping studying for this nonsense.

“Drinking, man. Did you start drinking before you arrived?”

“No.”

“Well, then you should really start otherwise we are going to have a shitty night.”

Cas glowered at the man but took the red solo cup from his hand and chugged the entire contents in about five swallows. He handed the cup back to the guy whose green eyes were wide with surprise. Then he grinned.

“Alright, then.”

He filled up the cup again and handed it to Cas before filling up his own cup. The man led him by the tied wrist away from the keg as it became more crowded by thirsty party-goers—all of whom were zip tied together in pairs.

“What is the point of this?” Cas asked, holding up their bound wrists.

“It forces you to meet new people. So you can’t stay attached to the person you came to the party with all night.”

Cas gave him a dubious look and then jumped when a pair stumbled into the back of the couch. One of them fell over the back and the other was half pulled over by their attached arm. The guy smiled.

“It’s also funny.”

“If you pull me over the back of a couch...” Cas warned.

The man laughed and his face lit up. He did seem really nice, or at the very least, outgoing.

“Wouldn’t dream of it...” he trailed off expectantly.

“Cas.”

“Cas. I’m Dean.”

Dean offered his free left hand, and Cas awkwardly shook it with his right.

“Nice to meetcha. So, why are you at this party if you didn’t want to come?”

Castiel allowed himself to be pulled through a wad of people and then to a loveseat in a room where the music was blaring even louder. He didn’t bother to answer since he was certain Dean couldn’t hear him. Dean plopped down onto the loveseat heavily, inadvertently yanking Cas with him. His drink sloshed out onto the floor, but Cas didn’t mind; he didn’t plan on drinking more anyway. He watched several people bounce and grind to a rhythm that didn’t quite match that of the pounding beat of the music, and he could feel that his face was scrunched up slightly in disgust.

Then Dean leaned into him and put his lips almost on his ear as he spoke to him. Cas missed most of it, but he heard the word “Come” spoken in Dean’s deep voice. His pants would totally be on fire if he said that he didn’t feel a pleasant tingling in his groin as a result—Dean was a good looking guy after all—but he didn’t feel any real attraction toward him. So he turned his head and leaned close to speak in Dean’s ear.

“What?”

Dean tilted his head down and attempted to rub his ear against his shoulder, like he was trying to get something off of it. However, he was smiling while he did it so Castiel didn't take it personally and just assumed that his breath had tickled him. Dean leaned back in.

"Why did you come?"

Cas once again spoke directly into his ear, but maintained a little distance. He was going to feel like he was having a conversation on a boat if they both had to keep leaning into each other.

"My boyfriend is the new small forward on the basketball team."

Dean bobbed his head in understanding.

"Why are you here?" Cas asked, mostly because he felt it was the proper reciprocal social convention in this situation.

"My friend is roommates with a team member. He—the team member—wanted to bring his girlfriend, so he told Benny he had to bring someone to get into the party because it was a Handcuff Party."

"A Handcuff Party? Again, what is the point?"

"You have to drink a certain number of drinks to be released, and then you can choose someone else to be handcuffed to."

"Well, my friend, you are shit outta luck tonight, then."

Dean grinned. "Why?"

"Because I'm done drinking. That stuff in the keg is terrible."

"Uh, yeah. It's supposed to be. What are you expecting? Artisanal crafted microbrews?"

"Just something that costs more than twenty bucks a keg."

Dean laughed. "Okay. So, if I'm stuck with you, let's see if we can tolerate each other."

Cas narrowed his eyes at him and Dean just kept his cheeky grin in place.

"Preferred decade of music?"

"Eighties."

Dean made a horrified expression.

"Eighteen hundred eighties, that is."

Dean's brow creased. "Not sure if that's better or worse."

"Trust me: better. You?"

"Seventies, man. Some good rock came out of that decade."

Cas leaned away and lightly shook his arm like he was trying to shake loose his attachment to Dean.

"Ugh, please don't tell me you're going to sit here and praise the Rolling Stones and tell me Mick

Jagger is your idol.”

Dean let out a loud bark of laughter and yanked Cas back closer by their joined arms.

“Fuck the Rolling Stones. I’m talking about Zep, man.”

Cas rolled his eyes. “That’s almost worse.”

“What?!”

“Come on, Dean. About a third of their songs are not good. A third are only good if you’re high while you listen to them. And the other third that are kind of okay songs...”

Cas paused enjoying the increasingly scandalized and murderous expression contorting Dean’s features into something more hilarious than scary.

“Plagiarized.”

“You take that back!”

Cas just smirked at him.

“Take it back!”

Cas squealed—and God would he never live that down—as Dean’s hands found his sides and it became apparent that he was very ticklish. Dean wouldn’t let up until he had screamed “uncle” three times. By the time he was allowed to sit up, his abs hurt from laughing so much. They settled calmly on the loveseat, their impromptu tickle fight going unnoticed by the partygoers around them.

“Okay,” Dean said, leaning back in to speak in his ear. “AC/DC.”

Cas nodded. “Yes, I like them.”

Dean sighed in relief. “Well, thank God for that. What kind of car do you drive?”

Cas snorted. “It’s an ’89 Subaru GL; I’m not sure it actually still qualifies as a car.”

Dean laughed. “The clunker your parents bought for you when you turned sixteen?”

Cas nodded.

“Heh, yeah,” Dean commiserated. “My first was a minivan.”

Cas smiled at the thought of Dean behind the wheel of a minivan.

“It wasn’t all bad though. Take the backseats out, throw in a few pillows and blankets, and you’ve got yourself a mobile sex room.”

Cas made a face. “Ew. I would never have sex in the back of a minivan.”

Dean grinned and leaned forward. “That’s because you’re a classy guy. I can tell.” He tapped Cas’ cup with his lightly. “Now drink your cheap beer.”

Cas smiled, but obeyed the order. It didn’t taste as bad as the first round, but not by much. He never did find out how many drinks were needed to get untied from Dean. The two of them never got another drink as they stayed on the loveseat and talked. After the initial obligatory “get to



know you” questions that made them realize they didn’t have a ton in common, they discovered they were both clandestine gamers on World of Warcraft. Castiel had never had a three hour conversation with someone about the RPG game that didn’t take place online. It was nice to know those people “out there” were in fact made of flesh and blood too.

As Zeke escorted him back to his dorm, he repeated Dean’s username over and over again in his head so that he wouldn’t forget it before he could get to his computer and logon and find him. Zeke nudged him gently with his shoulder. Castiel looked up and smiled at his boyfriend.

“What?”

“Thanks for coming,” Zeke said softly. “I know you didn’t want to...”

“That’s okay. When we get back to my room, I’m going to make you kiss me in public.”

Zeke spluttered for a moment, and then ducked his head as he blushed. Cas smiled. He liked flustered boys.

“Did you at least have fun?” Zeke asked after he recovered. “I hope you weren’t zip tied to someone awful. I know you wouldn’t drink enough to get cut loose.”

“Actually, it was great. I met another gamer.”

“Hm.”

“Don’t make that noise. You don’t have to talk about it or play it. Be happy I found someone to geek out with over it that’s not you.”

“Small favors, I guess. But now are you going to be stuck indoors even more?”

“No,” Cas said with plenty of attitude, side-eyeing his smirking boyfriend. “In fact, we’re going to meet up for lunch on Monday at the University Center. Turns out we both have classes that end at one nearby.”

“Do I know him?”

“Hm, probably not. He’s a friend of the roommate of one of your teammates. His name is Dean.”

“Is he cute?”

Cas let out a small laugh. “Understatement.”

He winced internally as he saw Zeke’s head turn quickly toward him. That wasn’t the best thing to say to your honey bear.

“Should I be jealous?” Zeke asked lightly.

Cas linked his arm with Zeke’s and smiled up at him. “Yes, by all means. Get all protective and possessive. It’s a huge turn on.”

“Cassss,” Zeke murmured softly, his skin clearly turning red even in the poor lighting provided by the lampposts on the path they walked on. Then his eyes darted to Cas and away. “Seriously though...”

“Nah,” Cas said. “Just a guy. Also, I think he might be straight. Though I wouldn’t bet my life on it.”

Zeke hummed and then suddenly stopped walking. He pulled Cas in tightly against him. They stood at the back of their dorm building, hidden from view by the woods behind them and the dumpsters parked just to their left. It wasn't a terribly romantic location, but it didn't matter as Zeke finally took some initiative and kissed Cas like he actually liked doing it. Cas smiled when it was over and looked up into Zeke's eyes.

"Nothing to worry about," he said softly.

And there was nothing to worry about—not that Castiel had even been worried. He and Dean met for lunch on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays after their classes for the remainder of the semester. They mostly talked about gaming (quietly so no one would overhear them) and the occasional conversation about their studies and extracurricular activities. They went to home basketball games together so that Cas could support Zeke, and Dean could support his girlfriend who was a cheerleader. Though he suspected Dean was there to support the entire squad.

At the end of the year they agreed to text each other occasionally over summer break as they lived in different states, but they weren't too worried about keeping in touch. Now that they were sophomores, they could choose their own roommates and Castiel was ready to drop Ion. Dean hadn't had much luck with his roommate either, so they agreed to room together the next year.

Their first semester together had been a tempestuous clashing of wills as Dean was much neater than Cas had anticipated and Cas refused to acknowledge the "sock on the door" messages that were left for him nearly every weekend. Eventually Dean stopped bringing girls over (Cas supposed he went to their rooms instead) and Cas stopped leaving his clothing and cereal bowls all over the room. By the time the basketball team's annual Handcuff Party came around at the beginning of the spring semester, they were suitably acclimated to each other with only the occasional gripe if someone's alarm went off too early on a weekend.

Castiel told Dean what time he would meet him at the party and arrived on the arm of his boyfriend who had been promoted to power forward as a starter. Zeke had been so excited at the news, he'd gone down on Cas in an empty classroom in the Tyler Building. The building that mainly hosted history classes was the least trafficked building on campus, but it had still been incredibly public for someone like Zeke who had only just the previous summer agreed to start sharing mutual handjobs with his boyfriend.

Cas couldn't say he wasn't pleased with the change—it meant that he and Zeke could now hold hands as they walked across campus together—but it had also occurred to Castiel that day that Zeke was much more passionate about basketball than he was about his boyfriend.

"Hey roomie," Dean called out as they mounted the steps to the house together. Dean had brought along Benny. Or maybe Benny had brought along Dean again. The bass from the sound system was making the porch floorboards vibrate.

"Hello, Dean. Did you get your paper back?"

"Oh, God, don't make him start again," Benny sighed.

Dean shot him a dirty look and then beamed at Cas. "Totally aced it."

"That's great! Maybe now I can get some sleep at night rather than listening to some weird blanket pile mutter at his computer monitor."

Everyone laughed at Dean's expense and he frowned at them as he let himself inside the house.

They were accosted by the team members manning the door. Zeke was immediately tied to one of the cheerleaders who had been waiting inside, and Benny put himself right next to her friend so that he could be tied to her. Dean and Cas were attached at the wrist and sent on their way.

This year they avoided the kegs and dug through the ice chests to find the semi-drinkable canned beer at the bottom. Cas' hand was freezing after digging through the pile of ice, and Dean tucked it under his armpit, which might have grossed him out with someone else, but after living with Dean he knew how clean both he and his clothing were. Of course, with his left wrist tied to Dean's and his right stuck under his arm, they probably looked like they were doing some awkward middle school dancing.

Cas held his beer in his left hand and had to drag Dean's hand to his face every time he took a sip; Dean held his in his left hand and had to stand near to Cas so that he could bend his arm close enough to his face to take a sip without letting Cas' other hand slip out from underneath his arm. Castiel was certain they looked ridiculous, but they felt comfortable around each other, so they really didn't care.

"You know," Dean said after a couple minutes of comfortable silence, "it's weird."

"What? Trying to drink with half an arm?"

"No. Well, yes, that too. But like, this is the first semester—since like freshman year of high school—that I haven't had a girlfriend or a boyfriend. It's like...I keep thinking there's somewhere I need to be or something to do, but I've got no one to be responsible for. I have no idea what to do with myself. Maybe start a new character in Warcraft or something."

"Or...you could concentrate on your studies."

Dean shrugged. "I get good enough grades."

"I know. But, I feel like you're not taking classes that really interest you. You're going to have to declare next year. Don't you want to do a major that holds your interest?"

"That's a good sentiment and all, but isn't it just as important to major in something that can help you get a job later?"

"Not necessarily. Most people don't even wind up working in the same field that they studied in college."

"Then what's the point of college?"

"Keggers and homosexual experimentation?"

Dean laughed. "Already done both of those."

"Hm. Better drop out then."

Dean scoffed. "My mother would murder me. Slowly. With a shrimp fork."

Cas smiled. "How about engineering? I mean, that's why most people come to this school anyway, for the engineering program. And you like to make stuff."

"I don't think it's that kind of engineering."

"It can be. Civil engineering builds bridges. And mechanical engineering builds mechanical things."

“Wow, Cas. You really know your shit.”

“Shut up. Just think about it.”

Dean shrugged noncommittally.

“Guys!” a drunken, very tall basketball player said as he stumbled into them, toting along a teeny, tiny girl who was zip tied to him. “Beer pong! Beer poooooooooooooooooong!”

He took off and Dean grinned after him. He turned to look at Cas.

“No,” Castiel said.

“Come on, please, Cas? One round.”

Cas sighed dramatically, but allowed himself to be pulled into the living room. Four rounds later he was pretty blitzed, which is why he didn’t question it when Zeke came around and cut him free from Dean. They stumbled upstairs to someone’s room and had real sex for the first time. He did manage to make it back to his dorm that night so that he didn’t have to do the walk of shame in the morning. Dean was still up and looking over the course catalog for the fall semester on his computer monitor.

“Hmm, engineering courses,” Castiel said with only the tiniest of slurs in his voice.

Dean quickly minimized the window and turned to him with a scowl, which then morphed into a grin as he took in Cas’ disheveled appearance. Cas flopped on his bed and Dean leaned over the back of his chair.

“You slut. You totally gave it up,” Dean teased.

Cas tossed a pillow at him but it was off target by a good five feet.

“Hush.”

“Was it good?”

“S’alright.”

“Just alright?” Dean asked incredulously, trying not to laugh.

“I mean, it was good, of course. Just...sometimes I get the feeling Zeke imagines I’m LeBron James or something.”

Dean snorted out a laugh. “Dude. I’ve seen you naked. You ain’t LeBron James.”

“Shut up, you ass. I mean like...so, Zeke and some of his teammates spent the whole night talking strategy rather than partying or drinking. They’re excited about this week’s coming game because it’s a rival and they’ve worked out an awesome game plan. That’s why he was horny. Because of basketball.”

“Not gonna say that’s not a little weird.”

“It’s not weird. I mean, when you’re passionate about something and it gets you all revved up, why not convert that to sexy-time activities? Especially when you have a super hot boyfriend?”

“Of course,” Dean said dryly at Cas’ self-assessment.

“But like...we like each other. We really do. But we’re not each other’s passion.”

“Dude. You’re also not stars in a soap opera.”

“I know.” He turned his head to look at Dean. “So, I’m being overly sensitive, right? I shouldn’t be expecting some great epic romance when I haven’t even been alive for a full two decades yet. Right?”

“I guess, dude. But, come on, do you really want a ‘great epic romance?’”

“I do. And so will you. Someday.”

“You are so drunk. Sleep it off, man.”

“Okay. Hey, Dean?”

“Yeah, Cas?”

“You want to room together next year? I have to stay on campus because of finances and stuff.”

“Yeah, sure. We’ll both have better shots at good lottery numbers, so maybe we’ll get a good—”  
Dean cut off when he heard the soft snores. He shook his head and turned back to his computer, smiling.

The beginning of junior year found Dean grappling with a heavy course load and playing catch up with the kids that had started their engineering track freshmen year—but he loved it. He’d spent the summer rebuilding his dad’s old ’67 Chevy, and teaching Cas about cars when he’d visited for two weeks. Dean had also spent a couple of weeks feeling small and lost when he’d visited Cas in Chicago. The city had just been too big for him, but even though he’d felt a little overwhelmed, he’d enjoyed the trip since he’d been able to hang out with Castiel.

He especially appreciated their time together over the summer since they currently barely saw each other due to their class schedules. Cas was buried up to his ass in religious tomes and biology books. He wasn’t sure how he was planning on incorporating his knowledge of world religions and the occult into his plans to become a doctor, but he supposed all doctors needed a hobby. As a result of their inconvenient schedules, they made a point to spend time together whenever they could. Things got a little better in the spring semester, but they found that most of their time together was spent quizzing each other for their classes. Dean felt like he could probably score pretty decently on the MCATs after all the secondhand studying he’d done with Cas.

At the moment, Dean was lying on his bed, proofreading Cas’ English essay on his tablet while Cas sat at his desk and looked over Dean’s work for his homework for his Thermodynamics: Heat and Energy course. He caught a typo and corrected it himself. He’d just email it back to Cas with his corrections and comments rather than Cas having to do it himself.

“This is really good, Dean,” Cas said, breaking the companionable silence between them. “Your short answer and design is really ingenious.”

“Please, it’s not that innovative. I’ve stolen most of the ideas and just put them together differently.”

“Yeah, but you saw how they could go together differently.”

“I guess.”

“You should be proud of yourself,” Castiel said, turning in his chair so he could look at him.

“I am. I mean, this shit is a lot harder than that gen course stuff I was doing before, but I’m maintaining my grades and I feel more focused. I guess I’m...I don’t know...”

“Actually interested in it?”

“Yeah, probably. Although, I’m probably more focused because I still don’t have a girlfriend or something pulling my attention away. I mean, it’s a great feeling and all, but I can’t deny that I miss the sex.”

Cas chuckled. “Yeah. Me too.”

Dean turned his head to look at him and gave him an obnoxious smile. “Zeke holding out on you?”

Cas tilted his head, confused. “No, Zeke and I broke up.”

Dean’s eyes widened. “You did?”

“Yeah, like months ago. Didn’t I tell you?”

Dean wracked his memory. “Um...probably. Man, I’m sorry, I—”

“Nah, it’s cool. It was totally a non-issue. It’s probably why you didn’t notice. Like, it just became more of a chore than a pleasure to make time to see him. I think it was the same for him. Plus he was also like, ‘I don’t think you’re interested in me anymore.’ Can you believe that? He’s totally wrapped up in basketball and he says that my attention is focused elsewhere.”

“Focused where?”

Cas shrugged. “He didn’t say anything specific.”

“Maybe he meant your classes?”

“Maybe. I did enter hardcore MCAT study mode last semester.”

“Don’t remind me,” Dean groaned. “Thank God you’re done with that finally. This is the first week we’ve been able to hang out in like, forever.”

“We hang out basically every day, Dean.”

“No, we were in the same room together. Now we can actually enjoy each other’s company.”

“I always enjoy your company,” Castiel said over-sweetly.

Dean rolled his eyes and chuckled a rolled up ball of socks at him.

“Hey, ew! Those are used!”

“I know! You left them on *my* bed, you jerk.”

“Oh, yeah!” Cas perked up. “I didn’t mean to, honestly. I just got a phone call while I was changing and forgot them there. Professor Visyak called to tell me that the grant came through. So, she wants me to help with her research this summer and she’ll let me stay in the apartment over her garage. She said she can swap out the double for two twins and that you’re more than

welcome to stay there if you want to finish up those core requirements during the summer session. That way you won't have to pay to stay in a dorm."

Dean sat up. "Are you serious? She'll let us stay for free?"

"The board is part of my stipend for helping her with the research. And she said as long as we don't throw any wild parties, two boys make no more difference than one."

"Sweet. Count me in. I'd love to be able to lessen my course load for senior year." Dean gave Cas a snarky smile. "But will we survive it? We lived together all junior year, we'll live together all summer, and then all senior year too. Not worried we're going to get sick of each other?"

"No," Cas said simply and turned back around to finish looking over Dean's homework.

Dean snorted in amusement at Cas' easy declaration. Well, Dean wasn't worried about it either.

Dean and Cas were the only seniors on their hall. They might actually be the only seniors in the whole building. What few seniors remained in campus housing for their final year chose to live in one of the "fancy" lodges that were situated at the heart of campus. However, they would have had to have found five to six other roommates to live with them in the multi-room lodges. Dean's and Cas' circles of friends had very little overlap. They were content to stay in the nicest upperclassmen dormitory though, just the two of them sharing a room. It made things easy.

"Let's go, Cas!" Dean called out as he held the door open with a foot and leaned out into the hallway.

Cas tapped his highlighter on his textbook and held back his sigh. He *was* hungry. He closed his book and then slipped on his shoes as he grabbed his wallet. He exited the room and Dean locked it behind them. They made their way over to the new cafeteria that was built where an old parking lot had been. The large building was incongruous with their three years' worth of memories about the campus, but having another dining option was worth the weird feeling.

Cas hit up the cereal and salad bars while Dean made a sandwich, throwing some chips on the side, and then loaded a plate with pasta. They made faces at each other's dinner choices. One of their few mutual friends, Charlie, was sitting at a table by a window, reading a book. They crashed her solo dinner with zero guilt. She smiled at them after she recovered from her mild heart attack.

"Hey guys. You hear about the party the basketball team is planning this year?"

"Handcuffs?" Dean asked dryly.

"Nope ABC."

Dean and Cas exchanged looks.

"What's that?" Cas asked.

"Anything But Clothes."

Dean laughed and Cas shook his head. Then he shook his head at Dean.

"No."

“Aw, come on, man.”

“No. Besides, you have to be invited to those things.”

“Well, you know someone who can get us in.”

“Oh, yeah, let me just call up my ex and ask if wants to extend an invitation to us.”

Dean shrugged a shoulder. “You guys are still kind of friends, right?”

“Kind of.”

“Oh! Hey, hey!” Charlie started waving her arms wildly in the direction of the main service line. A pretty girl with dark hair spotted her and gave an acknowledgement with a nod of her head since her hands were occupied with her tray. She made her way through the light crowd and sat down at the table with them. Dean scooted closer to Cas to make room for her.

“Hi,” she said.

“Hey,” Charlie replied. “Guys, this is Dorothy. She’s in my statistics class and is totally a new member of the LARPing Club.”

“Well, maybe,” Dorothy said.

Dean laughed. “Maybe means yes to Charlie.”

Charlie gave him a look, but kept smiling. “Trust me, you’ll love it. Anyway, this joker that thinks he’s clever is Dean. He’s a closeted LARPer.”

Dean smiled at Dorothy, but didn’t refute Charlie’s completely inaccurate introduction because his mouth was full.

“And this is his boyfriend, Castiel.”

Cas choked on his drink and the pasta Dean had been swallowing got caught in his throat.

“He’s majoring in religion and is pre-med. I think that’s how you become a witch doctor.”

Dorothy laughed and Dean finally got his food swallowed.

“Whoa, hey, Charlie. Don’t lie to the girl.”

“I don’t think Cas is really going to be a shaman or something.”

“No, I mean, about...us. We’re not...”

“We’re not dating,” Cas said.

Charlie looked genuinely surprised. “You’re not?”

“No,” Dean said firmly.

“Are you sure?”

Cas laughed and glanced at Dean. “Yeah, I think we would know.”

“But...you’re always together. I mean, *always* together. And on the rare instances you’re not, the



only thing you talk about is each other. And, you wear each other's clothes."

Dean glanced at Cas and saw that he was wearing one of his flannel over shirts; he already knew he was wearing Cas' AC/DC T-shirt.

"And you eat off each other's plates."

Cas paused as he crunched into the chip he'd stolen off of Dean's plate. Dean looked at the pile of marshmallows he'd fished out of Cas' Lucky Charms sitting on the corner of his sandwich plate.

"And, geezus guys, the way you two look at each other..."

Dean and Castiel stiffened. Charlie stopped talking. She attempted a small smile.

"Well, sorry. I didn't mean anything by it. I just honestly thought—well, it doesn't matter what I thought. I guess it only matters what's true. My bad."

The table fell silent as Charlie and Dorothy awkwardly ate their food and Dean and Cas stared at their plates, deep in thought. Charlie and Dorothy eventually started up a conversation, and when everyone was finished eating they took their trays to the return area and walked outside. It was still fairly light out and Charlie checked her watch.

"So, they're screening *Avengers* on a big screen at the Quad tonight at eight. Do you guys want to go?"

"Yeah, that sounds like fun," Dorothy said.

"We're in," Dean said, realizing he was speaking for Cas—making them a unit, like he normally did—a moment later.

"Great. I'm going to go get a blanket from my room. Dorothy, you wanna come with?"

"Sure."

"Cool. We'll see you guys there. Go to the side away from the road."

"Okay, see you there," Dean said.

Charlie and Dorothy took off and Dean turned to Cas. He didn't look upset or perturbed or even confused.

"You want to get some towels or something to sit on?" Cas asked. "I don't want bugs crawling all over me."

"Yeah, sure. Let's go."

They turned and started walking back to their dormitory. Dean glanced at Cas. He looked over and caught his eye. Cas smiled, and then reached out and took Dean's hand. Dean smiled back and faced forward as they laced their fingers together. They walked hand in hand down the sidewalk, tacitly comfortable with the "new" dynamic of their relationship.

"Two best friends falling in love—now that is a great epic romance."

"You just had to ruin it, didn't you?" Dean sighed, and then gave Cas a wink.

### 3. Crush on Friend's Sibling – Destiel – Mature

*Warnings: use of roofies (not Dean/Cas)*

When Castiel was five years old, he witnessed one of the greatest feats of daring and strength ever accomplished by a human. A fifth grader—he couldn't have been more than ten years old—climbed to the tip-top of the jungle gym on the Big Kids playground. Boys and girls from both playgrounds whooped and hollered as they watched this mighty giant let go with his hands and stand up on two feet. Castiel and the other Little Kids wrapped their pudgy fingers around the chain link fence separating them from the Big Kids. This brave boy was skinny with a head of bright blond hair and looked like a god as he roared his victory.

Then the whistle blew. Kids scattered even though they knew it wasn't for them. One of the fourth grade teachers marched over from the sidewalk. Castiel remained at the fence even as his classmates ran back to the tiny jungle gym on their side of the fence. The teacher stopped at the foot of the jungle gym and put her hands on her hips. The boy copied her and grinned down at her.

“Dean Winchester! Get down from there this instant!”

*Dean.*

Castiel remembered the name even after he had forgotten the name of half his classmates when he had new ones the next year. Dean had moved onto middle school, so there was no way for Castiel to ever get another glimpse of him. By the time Castiel reached middle school, Dean would be gone to high school. He was happy with the memory he had of the glorious spring day when he'd seen the impossible made possible by one soul that shone just a little brighter than all the rest. He knew he would never see him again, and that was okay.

Until he made friends with a kid named Sam in fifth grade. Sam was already ten, but Castiel's birthday wasn't until July, so he was still nine years old. He was always the youngest in his class by far, but at least he wasn't the littlest. Sam never held his age against him; they were only two months apart anyway. And now that his father was back from his tour overseas, Sam was going to be able to have his birthday party. Castiel thought Sam was a very good kid to be willing to wait two whole weeks to have his birthday party. It was going to be a *Yu-Gi-Oh!* party, which Castiel didn't think was as cool as *Pokémon*, but it was Sam's birthday.

Of course when he arrived and received his party hat, he couldn't care less what the theme of the party was. It had never occurred to him that his friend Sam Winchester might be related to Dean Winchester. But here he was, snapping the elastic strap into place under Castiel's chin. He smiled as he righted the hat on top of Castiel's head.

“Party's that way,” he said and sat back down on the stairs to wait for more of Sam's friends to show and give them their party favors.

Castiel stared at him. He looked different. He was fourteen. *Fourteen*. A teenager. He was basically grown up. Castiel felt that being almost ten made him a Big Boy...but he was still a baby compared to Dean. His hair was still blond, but it was a little darker. He wore it kind of long, kind of like Sam's. He wondered if Sam was copying his big brother.

Dean sensed he was being stared at and looked up. He had green eyes. Castiel had always

wondered what color his eyes were. He couldn't ever picture it. Green made a lot of sense.

"Uh...you need the bathroom or something? It's down that hall."

Castiel shook his head. He couldn't speak.

"Well, uh, Sam's out back on the porch. With the other kids. And the cake and presents and stuff. You can go by yourself." Dean made a funny expression. "You *can* go by yourself, right?"

"You climbed to the tip-top of the jungle gym," Castiel blurted out.

Dean cocked his head. "What?" he asked with a small laugh.

"In fifth grade. You climbed to the top of the jungle gym on the Big Kids playground."

Dean gave him an odd smile. "Yeah, probably. I guess a lot of kids did."

"Not to the tip-top. And not letting go and standing up on two feet. No one else ever has. Some tried. Garth Fitzgerald broke his arm trying."

Dean grinned. "Really? I hold the jungle gym record or something?"

Castiel nodded.

"Hunh." Dean's eyes looked him over. "What's your name?"

"Castiel."

"Castiel. Weird name. Let me guess, you have an older brother named Inias and an older sister named Hester."

Castiel tilted his head. "How did you know?"

"All the Novaks have weird names."

Castiel blushed and dropped his head. He knew that no one else had a name like him, but he didn't know that it was weird! Dean must think he was a total loser.

"Hey, Cas, that's not a bad thing. I mean, aren't there like three kids named Sam in your class?"

Castiel looked up and nodded slowly.

"See? Who wants a boring name like Sam when you have a cool name like Cas?"

Dean patted him on the arm and the point of contact warmed pleasantly.

"Alright then. You better on head on to the backyard. I think there's a piñata."

Castiel smiled, drank in one more long look at Dean, and then darted down the hall that led to the back porch. He told everyone to start calling him Cas. By the time he had his first day of middle school almost four months later, all of his peers knew him as Cas and his parents had given up trying to get him to use his full name (even though they always called him by it).

Cas became best friends with Sam after that day, and it wasn't even entirely because he wanted to be close to Dean. Sam was nice and smart and had just enough rebellion in him that he could convince Cas to cause some mischief with him, but nothing too serious. They took many of the

same classes and Cas followed Sam into the band. Sam played trumpet and he did percussion. Sam followed Cas onto the baseball team; he was a starting first basemen and Sam was a relief pitcher. Cas had attempted wrestling; Dean held records and championships in the sport in high school, but after Cas had been accidentally choked unconscious on the first day of tryouts, he decided wrestling wasn't for him. Besides, he didn't need to wrestle in order to go to Dean's meets with Sam and cheer for him.

Cas and Sam hung out with Dean when they could. Fortunately Sam idolized his brother slightly more than Cas did, so he never felt like he was forcing Sam to follow Dean around. When Dean turned sixteen and got his license, he all but disappeared from their lives. It was kind of heartbreaking, which was why he was thankful he and Sam had more in common than just Sam's brother. It also afforded them the time together that they needed to try to sort out all the weird crap that happened to them in the year between their twelfth and thirteenth birthdays. Their voices, along with other things, dropped; they grew hair in inconvenient places; their joints ached when they grew several inches over the course of only a few months. And while he had always known that it felt good when he touched his penis and he had a vague idea of what sex was—he finally discovered exactly what masturbation was and how incredibly awesome it was. It also made him realize that his idolization of Dean Winchester had shifted into a crush.

Dean was in his senior year and would be heading off to college when Cas and Sam were just entering high school. It sucked that he would never be able to walk the halls and accidentally brush shoulders with his crush. If Sam were to be believed, it was an awesome feeling. Plus, Dean wouldn't be living at home anymore so he wouldn't even be able to see him when he went over to Sam's house. Though he supposed it was probably for the best that the object of his masturbatory fantasies wasn't someone he had to make eye contact with every day. But he was going to miss hearing Dean's deep, gruff voice and his obnoxious laughter as he pulled a prank on them. He was going to miss seeing the shoulders broadened by wrestling practice and that spiky hair he wore so short now that it looked light brown instead of blond. He wondered if Sam had intentionally grown his hair even longer because Dean had cut his.

He was there the day the Winchester clan packed up a small U-Haul trailer and hitched it to the back of the family car and drove Dean to Kansas State University. The University of Kansas was really the better school and Dean had gotten in, but Cas suspected Dean chose Kansas State so that he could get out of Lawrence—even if it was only an hour away by car. That was the last time Cas saw Dean in person for a long time. Cas was never around when Dean was home for breaks, and Dean never came home over summer breaks, opting instead to work full time at the job he worked part time during the school year.

When Sam and Cas finally got their licenses, they drove Sam's Dad's old Chevy Impala on pain of death threatened by Dean if they messed it up. At least, that was the message Sam passed on to Cas. It was nice to have the freedom. They no longer had to wait for the activity bus after their club meetings were over. They could drive one town over to the adult store that didn't card anyone who wanted to rent porn. It was totally an outdated way to watch porn—on a DVD—but they never had to worry about clearing their Internet histories or crashing their laptops with viruses. They also both benefited from the large backseat on more than one occasion as they always took turns of who got to sit back there with their date when they went to the renovated drive-in movie theater.

Cas' first kiss with Meg Masters was back there. Sam's first handy with Amy Pond was back there. Cas' first attempt at giving a blowjob to Zeke Frakes took place against the trunk while Sam scored in the backseat with Sarah Blake. No wonder Dean had always been out with this car after he had gotten his license.

It was during spring break of their senior year that Cas and Sam managed to convince their parents

that they were responsible enough to make the hour and twenty minute drive from Lawrence to Manhattan and spend the night with a bunch of college kids. It wasn't Dean's spring break, but it was his senior year of college and this would be their only chance to attend a college party as high school kids—and then brag about it on Monday morning. Despite having driven farther before (without permission) with no problems, they nearly had an accident on their short, sanctioned trip up the highway. They would definitely have had their driving privileges permanently revoked. Or been murdered if they had wrecked Dean's baby.

They made it to Dean's off campus house that he shared with no less than five other boys just in time to be dragged out to a late showing of *Sucker Punch*. Cas had enjoyed the fantasy of the movie—but it really had no plot to speak of. Dean and his friends told him he had totally missed the point of the movie if he was looking for *plot*. He'd been too embarrassed after that to hang out with them later that night and stayed hidden in Dean's room until three in the morning when Dean and his roommate kicked him out to sleep on the pullout couch with Sam.

The next day, which didn't start until well after noon, Dean took Sam and Cas on a tour of the campus. Cas was still embarrassed from the previous evening and couldn't even appreciate how beautiful Dean had become. He was so tall and his shoulders and back so strong...well, he supposed he could appreciate those since he was trailing behind the Winchester brothers most of the time. He did his best not to stare at Dean's ass, but he'd never seen him in a pair of jeans that actually fit him before. He looked good. He looked comfortable with his body. Cas tugged on the hem of his bulky sweater, thankful it was still chilly enough in late March to warrant him wearing it.

That night Dean and his friends were throwing a party to celebrate the “corruption of youth” as they called it. Sam and Cas had rolled their eyes. Like they'd never had beer or fooled around before. He wasn't sure if drugs were going to be involved, neither he nor Sam were into that scene, but he supposed he could always Just Say No.

Sam convinced him to ditch the ugly sweaters and put on the tight jeans and well-worn band tee he'd intended to wear as his “pick up hot college guys/girls” outfit. Sam was wearing a muscle tee—and he kind of had some muscle, but not really—and low slung jeans, but he did look a little older. Cas threaded a rivet studded black belt through the loops of the jeans and wondered if Sam would still want him to dress in his “maneater” clothes if he knew the man Cas wanted to eat was Dean. He chuckled at his own thought as he carefully applied a barely there outline of eyeliner.

“What's so funny?” Sam asked.

“Nothing. Just thinking about how you'd freak if you knew of my ulterior motives.”

Sam snorted. “You mean how you came on this trip not to keep me company but to see my brother?”

Cas whipped his head around and stared horrified at his friend. “You know?”

“Of course I know. I'm your best friend.”

Cas gulped. “Does he know?”

“No way. He probably still pictures you in your dinosaur pajamas when he thinks about you.”

Cas frowned.

“But that's why you're wearing your sexy twink outfit. Change his view of you.”

“It's not a twink outfit. Jesus.” Cas fidgeted. “Is he even into guys?”

“I think so. At least, what I heard through the walls of our bedrooms wasn’t always breathy girl sounds.”

“He could have been alone.”

Sam made a face. “Definitely wasn’t alone.”

Cas inhaled deeply, but it didn’t help to settle the rapidly increasing speed of his pulse. Sam clapped him on the shoulder.

“Dude. Relax. It’s just Dean.”

“Yeah,” Cas let out a breathy laugh. Just *Dean*. The shining pillar of bravery and beauty that still made him feel like a five year old gazing up at the tip-top of the jungle gym.

Three hours later Sam was pleasantly buzzed and Cas was thoroughly smashed, hugging everything that crossed his path, including a very large football player’s girlfriend and the stair railing. The music was loud and pervasive through the small house, and the laughing and talking and screaming filled every corner. The house was absolutely stuffed to capacity and it was difficult maneuvering up the stairs to Dean’s room; luckily Sam was there to help him. Sam let his friend collapse onto his brother’s bed and did his best to extract himself from Cas’ octopus arms.

“Just hang out here for like half an hour, then we’ll go back down. Okay? You drank too much way too fast. Anymore right now and you’re going to start puking.”

“But I feel good.”

“I know, which is why I’m cutting you off. Let your body process some of that. I’m going to go find some pizza or chips or something for you to eat. Need to soak some of that shit up.”

“Grab a Purple Nurple while you’re down there. They taste like shit but they really do the trick.”

“Okay, Cas. Just stay put, alright?”

“Okay.”

Cas did think that lying on the bed was better than standing at the moment. He didn’t feel sick or dizzy, but there was no point in pressing his luck by standing up. He strummed his fingers on his stomach and scanned the room. Dean’s roommate’s half of the room was covered in posters of scantily clad women with anatomically impossible bodies straddling motorcycles and holding snakes. Dean’s walls were bare. There was a picture of the Winchester family in a frame on Dean’s desk, but other than a turntable, a box of vinyl, and some dirty clothes on the floor, there were no signs that Dean lived in the room.

It was very different from Dean’s room in the Winchester’s house. That one held signs of Dean from the marks on the walls to the stains on the floor to the cluttered bookshelves that held more graphic novels than literary books. One wall was completely covered in the paper coasters he’d collected from the various restaurants and bars he’d been to over the course of his life. The farthest one was from New York City. His bedspread was a dark blue and green geometric pattern that was still fluffy even after years of use and had a pleasant Dean smell about them even after they’d been freshly laundered. Not that Cas had ever snuck into his room and flopped face first onto Dean’s bed like some kind of weirdo perv before.

Cas’ eyes tracked somewhat slowly to the door when he heard a knock. He was jolted into a moment of clarity when he saw Dean standing in the doorway and quickly sat up. The fuzziness

of his drunkenness quickly descended again as he watched the boy—God, he was a man now—walk across the room and sit next to him on the bed. He handed Cas a glass of water.

“How you doing, buddy? Sam said you were throwing them back like a pro.”

Cas flushed slightly and took the glass of water. “I can handle my liquor better than he can. He’s not the best judge.” He took a sip of the water as Dean laughed.

“That’s true. He’s a total lightweight, huh? Well, I trust you to know your own limits, but I just wanted to make sure you were up here puking in my bed.”

“No.” Cas set the glass on the nightstand next to Dean’s bed and scooted forward, tucking one leg underneath himself to facilitate the movement. Dean raised his eyebrows, but didn’t say anything as Cas put himself right into his personal space.

“Dean. You know...I like you.”

“Yeah? I like you too.”

“Don’t deliberately misunderstand me to brush me off,” Cas said. He paused as his brain tried to process that that was what he meant. He figured it came out right when he saw Dean’s face change to slightly guilty and then wholly wary. “I *like* you, Dean. I’ve liked you for a long time and I like to think about your hands on me.”

“Shit,” Dean whispered just before he gulped noticeably.

“I’m not asking you to like me back. I know you barely know me. But...” Cas licked his lips and Dean swallowed again. “I want to touch you.” He slid his hand onto Dean’s thigh and the man jumped. “And I want you to touch me.”

Cas leaned forward and pressed their lips together. Dean leaned back immediately, but Cas followed after him. He lost his balance and they fell back onto the bed. Cas’ brain had gone silent when he felt Dean’s lips for the first time—warm, full, soft—but the fall caused his legs to straddle one of Dean’s legs and his muscular thigh pressed against Cas’ groin. Cas’ brain snapped back online and he gasped at the suddenly sexual contact—he hadn’t been prepared for that and he shuddered as he ground his hips down against Dean’s leg.

“Shit, shit,” Dean cursed and grabbed onto Cas’ hips. Dean leveraged himself up and Cas sat back, still on Dean’s leg and moaned as his cock lost direct contact with that warm, thick presence between his legs. Cas was panting and opened his eyes to look at Dean. The man was staring at him with his lips slightly parted. His pupils were dilated. He dug his fingers into Cas’ hips. Cas closed his eyes and started to lean forward to kiss Dean—*kiss Dean*—again.

Dean demonstrated he’d lost none of his wrestling strength and lifted Cas off his leg and set him back on the bed. Dean stood up and ran a hand through his hair, exhaling in a long, loud stream.

“Cas. You’re drunk.”

“Not that drunk. I know what I want.” He leaned back on the bed and slightly spread his legs. “You can have me.”

Dean let out a bark of laughter and suddenly Cas recognized the odd look on Dean’s face. He felt sorry for Cas. Or was embarrassed for him. Cas sat up and drew his knees to his chest. Dean gave him a condescending smile which Cas was certain was meant to be sympathetic.

“Cas. I’m flattered. Really. You’re a good guy. And smart. And a good friend to my brother.

And you're cute, alright? You are. And your eyes...well. But...you're still a kid, Cas."

"I'm not a virgin," Cas snapped.

"And that has nothing to do with anything, man. You're sixteen. You're—"

"And you're twenty-one. So what? You think being at college, but still reliant on your parents, has really given you real world life experience and made you into a 'real' adult?"

Dean didn't get angry. He just smiled that irritating smile again.

"Cas, come on. You're my baby brother's friend. And I remember what it was like to be sixteen. And I thought I knew everything too."

"I don't think I know everything. I just think—" Cas cut off. He stood up and brushed past Dean. "Sorry I bothered you," he mumbled and hurried for the stairs.

"Cas, wait..."

Cas didn't wait. He ran downstairs until he found Sam. He was making out with some chick named Madison. So Cas found a nice college boy who didn't give a fuck that he was jailbait and made out with him in the downstairs bathroom. He refused to give him a blowjob though, so the guy led him back to the party and gave him a drink. About twenty minutes later he felt the roofies kick in. He was vaguely aware of being guided out the backdoor by at least three guys when suddenly there was shouting. He was aware of being jostled around and then dropped off on a couch somewhere.

When he woke up the next morning with a headache that had nothing to do with a hangover, the embarrassment of what he'd done the previous night made it ten times worse. He swallowed the pills that had been left for him on the coffee table along with a glass of water, and then followed his nose into the kitchen. Two of Dean's roommates were cooking eggs and bacon. Sam was sitting at the table looking miserable while Dean teased him for being a lightweight.

"Come defend me, Cas," Sam groaned when he spotted him in the doorway. "You know I can drink."

"You can definitely drink. You just get drunk when you do."

"Whatever."

Cas let his eyes slide over to Dean. He observed him with a neutral expression and then pushed out a chair with his foot. Cas sat down in it, his hands in the pockets of a hoodie he didn't remember putting on and knew wasn't his.

"You get hung over?" Sam asked and made a face as a plate of bacon was set next to him. He nudged it away with his elbow. Dean picked up a slice in each hand and crunched into one as he kept his eyes on Cas.

"Not exactly," Cas sighed.

He waited all through breakfast and while Sam was taking a shower for Dean to lecture him on being an idiot. For accepting an open drink from someone he didn't know. Like a fucking kid who didn't know any better. But Dean didn't bring it up, and Cas certainly wasn't going to even though he felt like he owed Dean a thank you for saving him from what was undoubtedly going to turn into a gang rape. He felt like such a child. It was all he could do to be in the same room with Dean until finally he managed to convince Sam that they had to get going.



Cas made it his mission in life to never see Dean again. He never visited Sam's house if there was a chance Dean might be home on break. He didn't attend Sam's high school graduation party at the Winchester house, and wouldn't let his own family dawdle at the ceremony lest they accidentally run into them. He went to college on the east coast and Sam picked a school on the west. Their friendship tapered down to an email or text sent every couple of months. Cas never went back to Lawrence once he had graduated—he'd discovered that Kansas was not enough of a world for him.

Even though he rarely talked to Sam and barely knew what was going on with his life, he still did manage to learn that Dean had become an EMT and literally saved lives for a living. He lived in Kansas City on the Kansas side (a momma's boy could never stray too far from home) and he read to children in the hospital in his free time. Cas had managed to get over Dean eventually, but this kind of information reminded him why he'd worshiped the guy in the first place. The reminder was usually pleasant, but always tinged with bitterness.

Cas was just finished with first semester finals for his senior year of college, doomed to be twenty and therefore below the legal drinking age for the duration, when his friend Balthazar asked him to drive across country during their winter break. His brother needed his car and Balthazar had agreed to drive it three thousand miles to San Francisco in exchange for airfare to get back to the east coast. Balthazar convinced Cas it would be fun and offered to split the cost of Cas' plane ticket back. Cas had weighed the pros and cons of staying in the bleak, grey frozen tundra that was Massachusetts in late December versus getting to spend a few days in sunny California. They left the next day and didn't even have their first cramped quarters argument until they were in Illinois.

Overall the trip wasn't too bad. Balthazar was pretty laid back and they were friends, but the trip took almost a week and by the end of it they were both convinced the designers of the 2007 Toyota Camry were sadists. At some point on the long journey, he'd texted Sam to let him know he would be in the area soon. Sam had replied that he would be in town because it was too expensive to fly home for breaks. Cas suspected that Mary Winchester was not pleased about that arrangement, but even with scholarships helping out Stanford had to be draining their bank accounts.

Balthazar's brother Bartholomew (and Cas thought *his* parents were cruel) agreed to let Cas make the short drive from San Francisco to Palo Alto to visit Sam overnight. Balthazar was more than happy to let him go off on his own as they both could stand to spend a little time apart from each other. Cas was a little worried it might be awkward when he and Sam were together again, but as soon as they saw they each other (and Cas got over how fucking tall Sam was now) they threw their arms around each other in a bone crushing hug and fell right back into their easy companionship.

Sam took Cas all over campus and showed him his favorite haunts and the awesome library and the other almost as awesome library and the most awesome law library. Cas teased him about his decision to apply to Stanford's law school; it was usually discouraged for a student to do their undergraduate and graduate work at the same school and Cas told him he was being incestuous. Sam had bitchfaced at him and dumped his half-full basket of fries onto the ground. Cas was then introduced to one Ms. Jessica Moore and Cas deduced that Sam was looking to stay at Stanford because Jess was only a junior. He wheedled and poked and prodded Sam all the way back to his off campus apartment until he finally confessed that he knew he was in love with her and wanted to marry her, but they'd only been dating a year so he was trying not to freak her out by confessing all of this to her too soon.

Cas grinned and put a hand on his shoulder as they stepped off the elevator. "Dude, with the way she looks at you, I don't think it would freak it her out."

“You think so?”

“Uh, yeah. Pretty sure.”

Sam’s smile would have made the sun appear dim. Cas just shook his head at him.

“Sammy!”

Cas and Sam turned to look down the hall. Waiting outside Sam’s door was Dean.

*Dean.*

Cas’ heart leapt to his throat as Sam hurried forward to engulf his brother in a hug.

“Hey, Dean! I didn’t know you were coming to visit.”

Dean shrugged. “Baby needed to stretch her legs, so I thought I’d swing by and bring you your Christmas presents from Mom and Dad.”

“Sweet! Have you been waiting long?”

“Nah, not really. I tried calling, but you didn’t answer your cell phone.”

Sam blushed. “Yeah, I left it at Jess’ and just got it back this afternoon. The battery’s dead.”

Dean smirked at his brother. “You do realize how lame it is that your cell phone spent the night at your girlfriend’s place and not you, right?”

“Shut up,” Sam grumbled. He unlocked the door to his apartment and then turned to Cas and gestured at him. “I have another visitor though so, sleeping arrangements will be interesting. Dean, you remember—”

“Fuck me,” Dean said softly.

*Bend over and I’ll gladly fulfill that request.*

Cas blushed at his thought.

“Cas. Cas Novak. Holy shit, man. It has to be like, what, four or five years?”

“Something like that,” Cas said and then cleared his throat of its hoarseness.

Dean’s half smile was a little awkward and he looked Cas up and down a couple times. Then he said, “Hey.”

“Hi.”

“Hello,” Sam chimed in, lowering his voice and imitating most likely Cas even though Dean’s voice was pretty low too. “Geez, you guys trying to compete for who can sound the most like they smoke two packs a day?”

He laughed and let them into his apartment. Dean stepped to the side and gestured for Cas to enter first. Cas did so and suddenly got the feeling that Dean was checking out his ass. He turned to look and just caught Dean’s eyes snapping back up. He smiled at him and kicked the door shut with his foot. He moved past Cas into the kitchen and opened Sam’s fridge like he lived there too.

“You got any beer, Sam?”

“Yeah, it’s in the back. Cas, you can put your bag here. You can take the couch and Dean and I can share a bed.”

“Speak for yourself,” Dean said, hanging over the side of the open refrigerator door and popping the tab on a canned beer.

“Dude, come on.”

“You’re like eight and a half feet tall. There’s no room.”

“You’ll survive for one night.”

Dean rolled his eyes and looked at Cas. “You want a beer?”

“Sure.”

Dean dug back into the fridge and produced a can of Miller Lite. Cas made a face at it as he caught it.

“Thought you had better taste than this, Sam,” he said.

Dean laughed and Sam flicked him off.

“Don’t drink it then.”

Cas popped the top and took a swig. “Nah, free is free.”

Sam caught his own can and told Dean to close the refrigerator door already. They settled down in the tiny living room, Sam and Dean making the couch look like a loveseat and Cas sat cross-legged in an oversized armchair. The trio started up an easy conversation, sharing what they had been up to over the past few years. Cas’ heart eventually calmed down and he even stopped being surprised every time he glanced at Dean and saw that he was only getting better looking with every year he aged. The giddy feeling in his stomach never quite went away, but fortunately there was nothing stilted or awkward about the evening.

More than once Cas could have sworn he caught Dean checking him out. When he stood up to get them more beers, when he stretched before heading into the bathroom. There was also the fact that when they decided to watch a movie and eat take out, Dean and Cas wound up on the couch, sitting closer together than the brothers had. Cas knew he was attractive; he knew he had definitely filled out from when he was a fairly effeminate teenager, but it was still a little shocking to be receiving that kind of attention from Dean Winchester. If it wasn’t all in his head of course.

The couch was too short for Cas to fit on comfortably, but he slept well and enjoyed listening to Dean and Sam bitch at each other in the morning about stolen blankets, farting, and pointy elbows. They decided to go spend the day in San Francisco, and Cas met them at the Ghirardelli store after he’d dropped off Bartholomew’s car. Cas had never been to San Francisco before, so the brothers took him to see the seals and Lombard Street and Little Tokyo and they drove over the Golden Gate Bridge. They ate dinner in some dive that Cas never would have ventured into on his own, but the food was excellent.

While Sam went to get his car out of the parking garage, Dean and Cas waited on the sidewalk with their hands in their pockets, rocking on their heels. The silence stretched out until it started to get a little uncomfortable. Cas figured he might as well take this serendipitous moment to thank Dean for helping him back when he’d been—dare he think it?—a kid.

“Hey, Dean...”

“Yeah?”

“Um. I wanted to thank you. For that night. Um. When Sam and I visited you in college? And I...almost had a really bad night. But, you sav—helped me. And I never thanked you.”

Dean shrugged. “Not something a person needs to be thanked for. Just something they ought to do.”

Cas smiled and looked at his toes. “Yeah, well, thanks anyway.” He was happy that he now had confirmation that it had in fact been Dean who’d been doing all that yelling and rescuing. His memories of the incident were fuzzy at best. He’d actually begun to wonder if Dean hadn’t said anything the next morning because he hadn’t known what had happened to him. But now he knew that Dean had saved him, and he remembered it too. The happiness made him bold. He looked up.

“So, it was really good catching up,” he said.

Dean nodded in agreement.

“Maybe we can exchange emails or something so we don’t have to wait four years to do it again.”

“I never check my email. But, I can give you my number and you can text me.”

“Sure.”

Cas dug his phone out of his back pocket and unlocked it. He pulled up the dialer and handed it to Dean. He punched in the number to his phone and *Smoke on the Water* began to play. Cas smiled. Now he knew why every time he heard that guitar riff he thought of Dean. Dean handed him his phone back and saved the number while Dean saved Cas’ number in his phone. They were spared trying to find another topic of conversation when Sam pulled up to the curb. The Winchesters dropped Cas off at Bartholomew’s place and both promised to keep in touch. He had a feeling he and Sam would be good about it for a few weeks, but they would probably resume their sporadic contact before long.

Dean—he had no idea how that would go. He suspected he might never even hear from the guy. Although Cas had asked for Dean’s info, so maybe he should be the one to text first. He was saved the decision when he received a text from Dean while he and Balthazar were waiting at the airport for their flight. They texted for forty-five minutes until he had to shut his phone off. When he got back to his apartment, he took a chance and gave Dean a call to tell him he got in safely rather than text. They talked for three hours. Cas tapped the phone against his lips, feeling the hot battery on the sensitive flesh, after the call ended. He decided not to stress about what it could all mean and just enjoy it for what it was.

Through January they spoke about once a week, but the conversations were so long Cas had to resort to plugging his phone into the wall on more than one occasion. In February, they started texting daily and the phone calls became shorter but more frequent. By the end of March, they spoke on the phone almost every day, usually before Cas went to bed because even with only one hour’s time difference it was difficult to speak earlier in the day since Dean worked overnight shifts. He would call at nine o’clock Cas’ time, they’d speak for an hour, and then Dean would go to work while Cas went to bed so he’d be awake in time for his nine o’clock class in the morning.

“Do you like it?” Cas asked. “Working overnight?”

“It’s like any shift: it has its benefits and its drawbacks. But, I don’t mind taking the overnights because I live alone. Some guys have husbandly duties to tend to at night, you know?”

Cas laughed. “They can only have sex at night?”

“Well, I assume they can’t go do it at their wife’s place of work, so…”

“I see. But what about the single guys? It’s not like they don’t have their own needs.”

“True, but daylight, midnight—my hand don’t mind when I wake it up at odd hours for a little R&R.”

Cas giggled. “I bet your hand just doesn’t say anything because it’s afraid of losing you.”

“No way. It’s never had it so good as me.”

“Oh yeah? Your cock that great, Dean?”

“You have no idea, Cas.”

“Then tell me.”

There was a pause and Cas bit gently on his lip as he listened for Dean’s reaction over the phone.

“It’s big, Cas. Bigger than anything you’ve ever had.”

“You sure about that?”

“Yeah, I am.”

Cas smiled and settled more comfortably on his bed. He tapped his fingers on his stomach, but didn’t move them any farther south.

“Cut?” he asked.

“Yep. Big head too. Really tugs on the rim going in and out.”

Cas moaned softly and squirmed, trying to generate a little friction in his groin from his legs. His hand slid down his T-shirt and toward the waistband of his boxer shorts.

“You always top, Dean?”

“Not always.”

Cas’ breath hitched as his fingers brushed the head of his dick.

“Do you like getting fucked, Dean?”

“I really do, Cas.”

Cas groaned louder and grabbed his shaft in his fist. Dean swore on the other end.

“Are you touching yourself, Cas?”

“Y-yes.” Cas moaned again and used his arm to push the boxer shorts off his cock. With his stiff member free, he set up a nice, slow rhythm with his hand. “You want me to stop?”

“God no. Tell me what you’re doing.”

“I’m on my bed.” He tucked the phone under ear and moved his other hand to his chest. “I’ve got my underwear pushed down underneath my balls. My shirt is pushed up above my nipples.”

“You playing with your nipples?”

“Yeah, I love it,” Cas groaned, pinching and twisting his left nipple. “I love to have them sucked.”

He heard a soft grunt from Dean’s end.

“I’m fucking my hand, Dean. I’m wet and hard and my hole is longing for some fingers.”

“So, do it. Finger your pretty hole.”

Cas wriggled out of his boxers and then turned to his side so that he could lay his head on the phone and reach behind himself with his hand. He drew one knee up to expose his hole and let his index and middle fingers play over the sensitive ring of muscle.

“Feels good, Dean.”

“Still fisting your cock, baby?”

Cas gasped at the jolt of pleasure the endearment gave him. “Yes, yes, yes...God, Dean, I wish you were here right now.”

“Fuck, Cas...if I was there right now...I’d fuck you so hard you’d come untouched.”

Cas whimpered and quickened the pace on his cock. He brought his other hand to his mouth quickly and sucked on the digits to get them wet. Then he returned to fingering himself and let the tip of his middle finger slip inside.

“Deannnnnn...Dean...I wish I could see. I want to see your big cock. I want to watch it come all over me.”

Dean groaned and now Cas could hear the tell-tale sounds of skin slapping skin on his end.

“You gonna come, Dean? Pretend like you’re fucking me and come nice and deep and—”

Dean cursed loudly and hearing him grunt through his orgasm over the line made Cas fall over the edge of his own orgasm. They panted in each other’s ears for a few moments, and then Cas rolled onto his back before rolling back to his side as he realized neither of his hands was clean enough to hold his phone.

“Mm. Thanks for the goodnight story, Dean.”

Dean laughed. “You are so weird. Go to sleep. I’ve gotta get cleaned up...*again*...before I head into work.”

“G’night, Dean,” Cas murmured sleepily.

“Night, Cas.”

The following morning Cas had a panic attack about what he’d done. He was convinced Dean would never speak to him again because they had crossed a line that had never even been broached as a topic before. However, around the time Dean usually got off work, he texted to let

him know the night had been pretty eventless and that he finally listened to that band Cas had recommended a few weeks back. He told him they sucked. Cas smiled at the message and was able to attend the rest of his classes with the knowledge that Dean at least didn't hate him. They spoke again that night, and the next, but neither brought up the impromptu phone sex nor did it happen again. Cas couldn't deny he was disappointed that they both decided to let it go, but that was better than losing Dean as a friend if things became too awkward.

In May, Cas received a graduation present from Dean in the mail: a frame for his diploma that Dean had hand carved. Cas had been blown away by the gift and his friends all yelled at him for not telling them he'd been dating somebody long distance. He didn't bother to correct them, but making handmade gifts for other people didn't mean "more than friends."

After Cas had thanked him profusely for the gift over the phone that night, Dean casually mentioned that Sam was graduating the following week and that the whole Winchester family would be going out there to attend. Cas casually mentioned that his sister lived not too far away in San Jose and that he was due for a visit. Next week sounded as good as any.

With that thinly veiled plan to be in the same state at the same time in place, Cas contacted Sam and got himself invited to the graduation ceremony. When Cas saw Dean in person for the first time in months, only the presence of Dean's parents had prevented him from tackling Dean to the ground and licking his face like a puppy. Not that that should be how he greeted him anyway. As far he knew based on their phone conversations, they were still just friends.

John and Mary were thrilled to see him again and hugged him and interrogated him about his life right up until the ceremony began. Dean had just sat next to him and smirked as he did nothing to curtail his parents' relentless attention.

The main ceremony was short and sweet as each department then had their own ceremonies for the actual walking part—that way everyone didn't have to sit through seventeen hundred names being called. Even still it was pretty long considering Sam was a W and there were quite a few philosophy majors. Afterwards Cas and the Winchesters waited for Sam outside while he talked with his professors and some fellow graduates, which turned out to be a boon for them as they were able to spend some time with the unfortunately overly punctual Jess without Sam around as a buffer.

By the time Sam joined them, Cas was certain that Mary Winchester was picking out wedding dates and considering their options for venues. Sam got to pick what restaurant they went to for dinner, and John, Mary, Sam, and Jess piled into Sam's car while Dean and Cas followed behind in the Impala. It wasn't until they were on the freeway heading up to San Francisco that Cas discovered the car was here because Dean had opted to drive the almost two thousand miles rather than fly. Cas had laughed at him for most of the trip which made Dean scowl, but that only made him cuter.

When they parked in the lot at the restaurant, Dean told Cas to wait a moment before getting out. He watched Dean watch his family enter the restaurant, and then the man turned to face him.

"What is it?" Cas asked.

"I just..." Dean hooked a finger in Cas' belt loop and easily slid him across the leather bench seat in his dress pants. "I just couldn't wait any longer to do this."

Dean lifted his hand and put it behind Cas' head, combing his fingers through Cas' hair and drawing him in for a kiss. Cas leaned into him and curled his fingers in Dean's dress shirt. They didn't allow themselves to completely forget they were in a public parking lot in broad daylight, but the kiss was long and deep and filled with all the emotion neither had been willing to

acknowledge was building between them for the last several months. Then Dean pulled back and brushed his fingers through Cas' hair just above his ear and smiled at him.

"So. Now that you've graduated, do you have any plans?"

Cas licked his lips, still slightly dazed from kissing Dean.

*Dean.*

"I was considering graduate school."

"I hear the University of Missouri has great graduate programs."

"I hear that school is in Kansas City."

"You heard right."

Cas laughed and reached up to brush the backs of his fingers against Dean's cheek. He turned into the touch and Cas turned his hand over so he could nuzzle into his palm.

"Dean. You know...I like you," Cas said softly.

Dean smiled a little sardonically and wouldn't meet his eyes as he said, "I know. I like you too."

Cas' heart soared—like he was standing at the tip-top of the jungle gym with no hands.



## **Pretend Dating/Arranged Marriage (I)**

### **Pretend Dating/Arranged Marriage**

1. Need a Date for a Wedding - Cockles - Teen
2. Arranged Marriage - Destiel - Explicit
3. ABO: One Night Stand Results in Pregnancy - Destiel - Explicit

# **Serendipity (I)**

## **Serendipity**

1. Dogs Draw Their Owners Together (101 Dalmatians Meeting) - Cockles - General Audiences
2. Package Delivered to Wrong Address - Destiel - Explicit
3. Missed Flights - Cockles - General Audiences

# **Magical Intervention (I)**

## **Magical Intervention**

1. Sex Pollen - Destiel - Explicit
2. Love Spell (quasi Hogwarts AU type thing, but I don't really know anything about the HP series) - Cockles - Teen
3. Magical Transformation/Learn a "Valuable" Lesson - Destiel - General Audiences

## **Anonymous Sex (I)**

### **Anonymous Sex**

1. One and Done Semi-Public Sex (in the bathroom at a club, ha ha) - Cockles - Explicit
2. ABO: One Night Stand Turns Out to be the New Boss - Cockles - Explicit
3. One Night Stand Turns Out to be the Brother of Sibling's Fiancee - Destiel - Explicit

## **Sex Work (I)**

### **Sex Work**

1. Stripper AU - Destiel - Explicit
2. Escort Service AU - Destiel - Explicit
3. Porn Star AU - Cockles - Explicit

# **Domestic (I)**

## **Domestic**

1. Newlyweds - Destiel - Explicit
2. Kid!fic, Single Parent - Cockles - Mature
3. Kid!fic, Parents Together - Destiel - General Audiences

# **Amnesia (I)**

## **Amnesia**

1. Wake Up in Canon Verse but Thinks Married in AU - Destiel - Mature
2. Accident Results in Loss of Three Years of Memories - Cockles - Mature
3. Meet Amnesiac, Fall in Love, Past Turns Up Most Inconveniently - Destiel - Explicit

## Miscellany (I)

### Miscellany

1. Rebound Sex - Cockles - Explicit
2. Hate Sex - Destiel - Explicit
3. Angry Sex - Cockles - Explicit
4. Mistaken Identities - Destiel - Teen
5. Sex Battle - Cockles - Explicit
6. One is a Ghost - Destiel - Mature

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