

## By Grace We Are Saved

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/21104240) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/21104240>.

Rating:	<a href="#">Explicit</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">No Archive Warnings Apply</a>
Category:	<a href="#">M/M</a>
Fandom:	<a href="#">Supernatural</a>
Relationship:	<a href="#">Castiel/Sam Winchester</a>
Characters:	<a href="#">Sam Winchester</a> , <a href="#">Castiel</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Fluff</a> , <a href="#">Implied/Referenced Rape/Non-con</a> , <a href="#">Past Rape/Non-con</a> , <a href="#">Angelic Grace Kink (Supernatural)</a> , <a href="#">Episode: s12e09 First Blood</a> , <a href="#">Sam's Cage memories</a> , <a href="#">Smut</a> , <a href="#">Fluff and Smut</a> , <a href="#">(but not graphically described smut)</a> , <a href="#">Established Relationship</a> , <a href="#">Sastiel - Freeform</a> , <a href="#">Angelic Grace</a> , <a href="#">Top Castiel/Bottom Sam Winchester</a> , <a href="#">Post-Episode: s12e09 First Blood</a>
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2019-10-20 Words: 2,502 Chapters: 1/1

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by [Sumira79](#)

## Summary

Now that the brothers are back from having been stuck in the government detention facility for several months, Sam and Castiel have a lot of catching-up to do. But in the heat of things Castiel accidentally lets his Grace slip during an intimate moment, something he'd always been careful in the past not to do for fear of triggering some very bad memories in his beloved. But things don't exactly go as he'd feared, and he finds out something extraordinary about Sam in the process.

## Notes

This takes place directly after the end of 12X9 "First Blood", after they've all gotten back to the Bunker. This is meant to be more emotional than outright smutty, but I rated it as explicit just to be on the safe side. A word of caution though, it does make reference to Sam's experiences in the Cage, including his torture and other abuses by the Archangels. It doesn't go into graphic detail, but please keep your own mental/emotional health in mind when reading. And super extra thanks to Scylla for being an awesome beta and giving me really good feedback and help with ironing things out.

See the end of the work for [more notes](#)

Their relationship had been going on for some time now, (since not long after Sam had expelled Gadreel in fact) but despite that, the angel and his hunter hadn't really had THAT much time to be intimate with one another. It always seemed like there was some crisis or another looming on the horizon; one reason or another for Castiel to be working on something else while Sam and Dean handled the main problem, or vice-versa. But in all that time, when the two of them HAD found time to express their deeper feelings for each other on a more physical level, there was one thing Castiel had been very careful about.

Technically, angels were discouraged from having sexual relations with humans, but it certainly wasn't impossible. And normally, when an angel would climax, not only would their vessel respond in the normal, human way, but they would also experience a corresponding flare of Grace. It was generally harmless to the human, though some who were sensitive could conceivably feel it as a tingling rush. But Castiel was aware of what Sam had experienced during his time in the Cage. More than aware, he had gotten a taste of those memories when shifting Sam's madness to himself all those years ago, and before that madness had taken on a form more specific to himself, he had experienced it as Sam had. And not just the hallucinations of Lucifer, but all of it; the overwhelming memories of what had taken place and the abuses inflicted upon the human by both of the archangels who'd been trapped down there with him.

Because of that, whenever Sam and Castiel were being intimate the angel had always, ALWAYS made certain to keep a very tight control over his Grace. At first he was even very hesitant about "pitching" as he'd heard Dean once referring to that particular role in the act, but after some experimentation, Sam had concluded that he actually preferred it that way. He'd explained it one time to Cas that it helped, because it gave him good connotations for being on the receiving end. And also, he'd reiterated firmly that he trusted the angel implicitly, and he knew that Castiel would never hurt him.

But Cas had seen Sam react badly to other reminders of Lucifer or the Cage over the years, and he feared allowing his Grace to wash over Sam would trigger those horrible memories. So, although it was difficult, and in a way it was like holding back part of his orgasm, he did it anyway. He would do anything for Sam.

Tonight though... tonight there was a fervor to their movements as they undressed each other that hadn't been there in some time. As they pressed desperate lips together and stroked each other's skin, Castiel felt the desperation he'd experienced these past several months rising to the surface.

It had been agony not being able to find the brothers. Sam had prayed to Castiel often during his incarceration, (Dean had a few times as well, though not nearly so often) and at first each prayer was more like a report. Sam would reassure Cas that he was alright, that they weren't being tortured or anything like that, (unless one counted the food as "torture") tell him what little he could of his surroundings which never changed, and generally end with an "I love you."

As the days and weeks wore on though, the prayers got more rambling. Sam would talk about odd things that came to his mind, like old hunts he and Dean had gone on, or funny things

that had happened to them. Or he would talk about books he had read, going into great depth on the plots and characters and deeper meanings behind them. Sometimes though, especially at night when the angel assumed their jailers had turned off the lights, Sam would awaken in a panic, and his prayers were disjointed and filled with fear of remembered pain and pleas to save him, to please save him from "them". Those nights were the worst, because Castiel knew that Sam was experiencing flashbacks of his time in the Cage, but there was no way to help him. And even worse, it made him wonder just how many times Sam had prayed to him when he'd been down there. But those were prayers he never would have gotten. For not the first time, Castiel had cursed himself for not having thought of some other way of warding the brothers; some way that would at least allow HIM to find their locations.

It had gone on for months before the brothers managed to escape, and then, mere hours after getting them both back, he'd nearly lost them again due to that deal... that stupid, stupid deal. He knew Dean would be angry with him, but he couldn't bring himself to regret having killed that reaper. He'd meant it when he'd said that the world needed every last Winchester it could get

So now that they were safely back at the Bunker and Dean and Mary had retired for the night, Sam and Castiel were more than making up for lost time. With both of them finally bare and having found their way to the bed, their breaths ghosted over each other's flesh as they found new places to trail their lips, and the taste of salt on his human's skin was both grounding and somehow exhilarating for the angel. "M'sorry..." Sam murmured, seeming to have misunderstood the reason for the angel's low groan. "Shoulda showered first..."

Castiel shook his head and drew back a little, sliding his hands up to caress both sides of Sam's face as he stared into his eyes. "Listen to me, Sam Winchester," he intoned, "You are perfect, just as you are." And as if to prove it, he latched his lips onto the skin joining his lover's neck and shoulder, catching a slight hint of pine along with the sweat and causing a gasping moan to escape from the other's mouth. "You are the salt of the sea," he continued in between mouthing slowly downward, savoring each inch of skin he came to, "and the pine of the woods... You are the dust of the earth from whence man was made, and the sun gleaming in the sky," his fingers found their way to his almost bronze-colored hair and slid up into it along his scalp. "You are the wind dancing over the planes," his mouth trailed over the rounded, muscled contours of the hunter's chest, "and the starlit sky at night," his fingertips traced a path from his scalp over to his eyes, drawing softly over the now closed eyelids. He leaned up a little on his elbow while trailing a caress over Sam's cheek, waiting until the man was again returning his gaze. "You are all the best of my Father's creation rolled into one being, and I would not change a single thing about you."

Sam seemed at a complete loss for words, his eyes wide and trying to blink away the excess moisture starting to form. So he responded with pulling his angel's face up closer to his own and attacking his lips, as if needing to draw all of Castiel into himself. "Please..." he finally murmured against the angel's enthusiastically reciprocating lips, "Please... need you... need... need to know this is real." Castiel felt some part of himself crumple at the notes of desperation in Sam's voice. "Make... make me know that I'm really here. That you're really here."

Breaking the kiss, they rested their foreheads together for a long moment, breathing each other's breath as Castiel's hands stroked soothingly up and down Sam's sides. "I'm here..." he responded softly. And then he went about showing his human just how "here" he was, using his mouth and hands to tantalize and stimulate his most sensitive areas and driving all other thoughts from his head. In fact, so focused was he on bringing Sam to the height of pleasure that when the angel found his own climax, buried deep within his beloved, he'd forgotten to keep his Grace drawn in and it flared strongly even as his release flooded into Sam while the hunter's own was smeared between their bellies.

The angel was dazed for a bit afterwards and simply lay sprawled across Sam's chest, feeling the man's heartbeat and steady breathing. But besides those things, Sam hadn't moved, and when Cas belatedly realized what he'd done, he leaned up suddenly, worry etching his features as he studied his love's. The hunter lay still, his eyes closed though his hands still gripped the angel's back. "Sam?"

Castiel's worry must have come through in his voice because Sam's eyes opened almost immediately, his expression somewhere between awe and bewilderment. "That's... never happened before." His voice was still a little rough from his enthusiastic vocalizations just a bit earlier, and Cas feared the worst.

"Oh Sam... I'm so, SO sorry!" He didn't quite register the quizzical tilt the human's eyebrows took and rushed ahead. "I didn't mean to hurt you! It was an accident, I swear to you. I've always tried so hard to be careful NOT to let my Grace do that. And I promise I won't let it happen again. Please, believe me--"

So anxious was he to apologize and reassure Sam that Castiel hadn't noticed the man's attempts to interject. That was, until the hunter had resorted to pulling him in and kissing him, long and hard and very thoroughly. The feel of Sam's lips on his own, of his tongue seeking the inside of his mouth as though searching for buried secrets, of his hands so firmly holding him left the angel speechless. Which apparently had been the point since once he started reciprocating and relaxed a bit, Sam drew back again, though still kept his hands on either side of the angel's face, assuring that the human had his attention. "Listen to me Castiel. You haven't hurt me. Not at all. In fact..." a tender smile played over his lips, "I really, REALLY liked that. A lot."

Castiel felt a profound sense of confusion and it must have shown on his face, because Sam's smile widened just a little bit more. For some reason, Cas had noticed that his beloved tended to find his confusion endearing. "You... you did?" he inquired, "But I thought... I mean, I was afraid it would..." he winced a little, not really wanting to bring up the Cage. "After what has happened to you. Before. I thought my Grace might trigger some bad memories."

Sam gave him a reassuring squeeze. "Cas... you're nothing, and I really do mean absolutely NOTHING like either of them." At the angel's slight shrug, Sam continued on, elaborating. "I had a long time to become well acquainted with both Lucifer's and Michael's Grace. Lucifer was a cold fire, and like something gone bad, something rotten, like gas bubbling up in a swamp. And Michael was all self-righteous fury, and ozone. He was a forest fire, destroying everything in his path." Castiel's eyes widened a little and Sam pushed on, wanting and needing to get this out, for both of them. "I even remember Gadreel, what he felt

like.” His expression clouded a little, but it wasn’t the haunted look that he used to have when referring to the angel who had inhabited his body for several months those years ago. “He was... shame, and old wounds. An old, oaky smell, that maybe could have been better if given more sunlight.” He shook his head a bit, seeming to find some of the concepts and impressions he’d gotten difficult to describe.

“You though,” he continued after a moment, again making sure his beloved was looking into his eyes so he could see the truth of his words, “You are spring rain, and cool mint, and a hint of honey.” His soft smile returned and he slowly caressed Castiel’s back, right where he knew his wings were, (an especially sensitive place for the angel) and tightened his legs around Cas’. “I didn’t for a moment mistake you for any of them.”

Satisfied, Castiel breathed easier and nodded, resting his head back on Sam’s shoulder. They lay quietly like that for a little while, content to just hold each other. After a bit though, Sam cleared his throat, and Cas thought he heard just a trace of something wetter. “In fact... because I’ve never felt anything like your Grace before... It...” Cas squeezed his arm encouragingly, letting him take the time to find the words he needed. “I guess... some part of me always wondered... was always afraid that maybe, just maybe...” he couldn’t seem to finish, but Cas realized what he was getting at.

“Some part of you always wondered if you weren’t still back there. If it wasn’t an elaborate scheme of Lucifer’s like the hallucination of him had once proposed.” Sam nodded a little, and the angel remembered something else from the memories he’d gotten second-hand. “Like he actually did to you, more than once while you were there.”

“Yeah.” Sam held him a bit tighter, as if almost afraid that he might vanish into mist. “But, I don’t think that now. I mean, I hadn’t REALLY thought it for a long while but... well, the suspicion was always lurking in the background, you know? Especially the last few months.”

Cas nodded. He remembered all too well. “But never, not once in that entire time did either of them think of altering how Grace felt.” The angel stroked one of his hands upwards to cup Sam’s cheek, and he felt a trace of dampness on it.

“They wouldn’t have thought to do that, even if they were able. Most humans can’t distinguish the grace of one angel from another. It would have never occurred to them that you could.” Castiel sighed softly and let his Grace expand out, softly enveloping them both. “This just proves once again how singular and special you are.”

Sam gasped at first, then sighed and relaxed completely, seeming to almost melt into his angel. Without needing to say anything they both shifted, re-positioning themselves until Castiel was on his back and Sam lay curled into him, resting his head on the angel’s shoulder. Cas expended a bit of power to clean them both off and draw the blankets up over them. “If I can make the world feel real for you by doing this, then I’ll do it every time.”

Sam smiled softly and murmured back, “I got the feeling it felt better for you too.”

The angel nodded, humming an agreement. “It is a... fuller experience.”

The hunter chuckled softly and gave Cas a squeeze. “Good. Mind-blowing sex is something I could definitely get used to.”

“And I as well.”

Castiel continued to hold Sam while the hunter drifted off to sleep, content to have him back where he belonged.

## End Notes

This is also cross-posted to my Tumblr, and I can be reached there as well @wendibird

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