

World Without End

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World Without End

by [domesticadventures](#)

Summary

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“I know,” Dean says, walking Cas backwards over the threshold, kicking the door shut behind them. He finally pulls Cas’ tie free, tosses it to the floor. Could slide Cas’ coat and suit jacket off all at once, but does them separately instead, draws it out as he sucks at Cas’ bottom lip. “I don’t want the shortcut.”

Cas huffs a little laugh. “You’re going to keep surprising me forever, aren’t you?”

Notes

when one fix-it just doesn't feel like enough, post another!

naturally i owe [cecilia](#) yet another debt for the beta ♥

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

*I want the cottage. I want the
green grass and the tomato plants.
I want the peace in you;
the front porch rocking chair lullaby;
our cricket legs rubbing
together under the covers.*

*We can't have it all. I know
that, but humor me. We can't
have it all, but we can have most of it.
A sliver of it, at best, and that
might be okay.
A lemon tree, definitely.
Write that down.
A bench to kiss you on. A kitchen
with too many windows.*

-“Apple Pie Life,” Caitlyn Siehl

In the new and improved heaven, you can have anything you want.

It doesn't even take a snap of your fingers or a wave of your hand, unless you have a flair for the dramatic. With nothing more than a thought, you can have a change of scenery, a new car, food on your table, an entirely different roof over your head. It's easy, instant.

Here's the thing: When you have an eternity, it matters more than ever what you're willing to spend your time on. What you're still willing to put effort into.

They take a victory lap. They start with their parents, with Bobby, with Ellen and Jo, Kevin and Charlie and everyone else they lost along the way. By the time the initial rounds have been made, others have started catching up to them—Jody, Donna, the girls. Claire and Kaia all grown up, a few more scars and a lot more silent, knowing looks shared between them.

Heaven is full of people Dean loves and who love each other. Dean looks at them and feels drunk on it, overwhelmed by this feeling that can survive anything, hurt and pain and betrayal, this thing that lives in every inch of this place that exists beyond death.

“Catch you later,” Dean says to Sam, after, because they have all the time in the world. He's been saving the best for last.

He pictures where he wants to start his eternity and just like that, there it is—a cabin built out all in warm woods, filled with soft furniture, a table big enough for company, an upstairs bedroom to retreat to. Someday, he'll make himself a mansion just for kicks and invite over every single person he's ever known. He'll try out the kind of house he always pictured

coming in a prepackaged set with the wife and two point five kids and white picket fence. He'll even get nostalgic for a hundred different tacky motel rooms, will want to lie on a sagging mattress with Sam on the next bed over, but for now, it's this.

He steps inside with a grin on his face, and it's only when he finds it empty that he realizes his mistake.

In the new and improved heaven, you can have almost anything you want, can create almost anything you want out of nothing.

The thing is, the free will? It's the real deal. You can't conjure someone into existence just by wishing for it. If you want them there with you, you have to ask.

"Hey, Cas," Dean prays. "You got your ears on?"

There's no fluttering of wings, no rustle of displaced air—just a knock at the door.

Dean grins, walks over and opens it in a rush, finds Cas standing there looking almost sheepish, shifting from one foot to the other. He says, predictably, "Hello, Dean."

Time is strange in heaven, but it feels like he hasn't heard those words, that voice, in a thousand years.

"C'mere," Dean says, and wraps Cas in a hug, buries his face in his shoulder. "You're not gonna get rid of me that easy."

Cas tenses. "I wasn't—"

"Relax. I'm kidding, man." Dean pulls back to look him up and down, says, "Jesus, how the hell are you?"

Cas shrugs, smiles. He says, "I'm fine. I hear you've been busy since we last saw each other."

"I suppose so," Dean says. "You must already know what happened, though, since you...uh."

"I do," Cas says. "But I'd like to hear it from you."

Dean gestures over to the porch railing with his head, and they go to lean on it, standing shoulder to shoulder, looking out over a calm lake, a vast forest, trees swaying gently in the breeze.

"Well," he says, "obviously we stopped Chuck. Left him to be human, and now the kid is doing a real bang-up job of things in his place, huh?" He nudges Cas' arm, smiling.

The corner of Cas' mouth ticks up as he nods in agreement. "And after?"

Dean's smile fades. "Honestly? There's not much more to tell. It was kind of stupid. I beat the literal God and then got taken out a couple weeks later by a bunch of vamps with a clown fetish." He huffs a humorless laugh. "You know, for the first time in a long time, I didn't want

to die? I had all these ideas about the life I was gonna live, the things I was gonna do, and then..." He shrugs. "Just like that, it was over."

"I'm sorry, Dean," Cas says softly.

"Yeah. Me, too." He frowns out over the landscape, tapping his fingers against the railing. "But, well. I spent most of my life knowing I'd end up in hell or purgatory or the empty. Even what I knew of heaven...well, it seemed alternately like something I either didn't deserve or something that wasn't all it was cracked up to be. But this?" He gestures all around them, to the scenery, the house behind them, his friends and family a short drive away. "This is better than I ever could have dreamed."

"New God," Cas says, his pride for Jack written all over his face, in the warmth in his voice. "New rules."

"You both did a real bang up job," Dean says, hoping his own pride is evident. "And it's not just everything out there, but"—he taps his fingers against his temple—"here, too. All the fear and doubt and self-loathing...it's not that they're gone, but...I dunno. It's like I can finally connect the dots in my own life, see how things shaped me. It makes them quieter. Easier to carry. Makes it feel like maybe someday I'll be able to put them down entirely." He takes a deep breath, exhales slowly. "God, I don't even think I realized how constant they were. How heavy. I feel...lighter, here, I guess. It feels real fucking good."

"You carried a lot for a long time," Cas says. "You deserve to rest."

"Yeah, I suppose so. Thanks for that."

"You're welcome."

For a moment, it's quiet, just them standing there together, comfortable.

But then Dean turns to face Cas fully, and he says, "Hey, man, I gotta say something."

Cas shifts uncomfortably. "Dean," he starts, "it's okay—"

"No, listen. Please," he says, catching Cas' eye and holding it. "C'mon, you got your speech. Lemme have mine."

"I—" He swallows. "All right."

"You changed me, too," Dean says. "You know that, right? What you did, everything you said—not just at the eleventh hour, but ever since I first knew you—it changed me. You know, at the end, I told Sam I loved him for the first time in...Christ, I don't even know how long. I got to tell Chuck that I wasn't just the ultimate killer he wrote me to be. For the first time in my life, I really believed that. You gave me that."

"Dean..."

"Everything is clearer here," he says. "I can see it now, all the hangups I had on Earth and what a dense motherfucker I could be. And I'm sorry, god, I'm so damn sorry that in the time

we had together, you spent so much of it gone because I made you feel like you couldn't stay. Like you could never have what you wanted. That's on me. So, I wish I had said this sooner. But saying it now is the best I've got."

Gently, Dean reaches up to brush the backs of his fingers against the side of Cas' cheek, watches as he goes completely still, focuses entirely on Dean, holding his breath.

"I love you," Dean says. His palms don't sweat; his voice doesn't shake like he always imagined it would. His heart races, but that's just from the thrill of it. "Stay with me?"

—

"You know," Cas says, a little breathy as Dean presses a kiss to his throat, loosens his tie, "I could just—"

"I know," Dean says, walking Cas backwards over the threshold, kicking the door shut behind them. He finally pulls Cas' tie free, tosses it to the floor. Could slide Cas' coat and suit jacket off all at once, but does them separately instead, draws it out as he sucks at Cas' bottom lip. "I don't want the shortcut."

Cas huffs a little laugh. "You're going to keep surprising me forever, aren't you?"

"Ideally."

Cas holds Dean's face in his hands, curls his fingers around the back of his neck as Dean works at the buttons of his shirt. He removes his hands only long enough for Dean to slip the sleeves off his arms, pull his undershirt up over his head.

"You know what I realized, after?" Dean asks, as he lets Cas have his turn, as Cas mouths at his jawline, the side of his neck, and frees him of his jacket, his flannel. Cas *hmm*s against his pulse. "I realized there's so much about you I don't know."

Cas reaches up under Dean's shirt, grazes his thumbs along Dean's skin just above his jeans, making him shiver. "Oh?"

"Yeah," Dean says. He reaches down and pulls his shirt up and over his head, tosses it somewhere to the side of the stairs. "Like, for instance," he says, getting an arm around Cas' waist, pulling their hips flush, pressing their bare chests together, kissing Cas and smiling against his mouth. Dean ghosts his free hand up along Cas' side and he shudders, breath stuttering.

"You're a menace," Cas says.

"I know," Dean says, as they try walking up the stairs without having to part and wind up half tripping up the first few steps. They give up, laughing, and Dean lets Cas pull him along by his hand. Cas doesn't waste a single second once they get to the top—he spins Dean deftly around and down onto the bed with his legs hanging over the edge and climbs on top of him, knees straddling his hips.

Cas leans over to kiss him again before starting on Dean's belt, and Dean stops him there—holds Cas still with his face in his hands and looks up at him, at the flush in his cheeks, his slightly parted lips.

Dean can call up his memories perfectly, here. He can see, at a whim, every fond and indulgent and patient and loving look Cas has ever given him, can say with confidence that this look is one he's never seen before—this open happiness and want, the joy of knowing how you feel and knowing you're not alone in that feeling, that the other person loves you back in just the way you always hoped they would. He runs a thumb along Cas' bottom lip, over his cheek.

"This look," he says, "this one is new." He pulls Cas back down for another kiss. "It's a good look."

Cas swallows, turns his face to press a kiss against Dean's palm.

"I love you," he murmurs, different from before—quieter, more reverent, like he's dropping an offering into Dean's open hand.

"I know," Dean says. "God, how could I not?" It's true—he really understands the breadth and depth of Cas' love for him. A love so big he helped reinvent God, reinvent heaven. "You made all this for me. For all of us. Only you could have done it."

"Thank you," Cas says, as painfully sincere as always. But then his expression shifts to something a little more playful, and he says, "Can I get back to removing your pants, now?"

Dean gestures with one hand as if to say, *Have at it*, and Cas undoes Dean's belt with deft fingers, works open his jeans, has them down around his ankles before he realizes he's forgotten about Dean's boots. He huffs such a familiar, impatient sigh that Dean can't help but laugh.

"Are you *sure* you don't want any shortcuts?" Cas asks.

"A hundred percent."

In spite of his protestations, Cas wastes no time in kneeling on the floor in front of him. Dean pushes himself up on his elbows to watch Cas untie his boots, pull them off one after the other, followed by his socks and his jeans. He lifts his hips so Cas can slide his boxers down and off, keeps watching as Cas reaches up and curls his fingers around the backs of Dean's legs. Cas presses a kiss to the inside of his knee, just the barest brush of his lips, before working his way up the inside of Dean's thigh, setting his skin tingling, heat gathering low in his stomach. He resists the urge to hurry him along, to break the rules he isn't quite sure why he set.

Cas takes Dean's hands in his own as he kisses up over his hip bone, his stomach, as he blankets Dean's body with his own. He slides their arms up over Dean's head, lacing their fingers together, pressing the backs of Dean's hands into the mattress. He kisses the side of Dean's neck, finally kisses him on the mouth, runs his tongue along Dean's bottom lip and

licks into his mouth when Dean opens to him, presses their hips together in a way that leaves Dean gasping.

“Hey,” he says, “you still have your pants on but won’t let me use my hands? No fair.”

“Again,” Cas says, “you’re the one who wanted to do things the hard way.”

“What can I say? I’m old-fashioned.”

But of course Cas relents, indulges him just like he always has in a thousand different ways. He releases Dean’s hands, lets Dean reach down and undo his belt as he slides out of his shoes, stands up fully to slip out of his slacks and boxers.

For a second, Cas just stands there, looking down at Dean, both of them half hard. The way Cas is looking at him, his smile lopsided, his expression still a little stunned, like he’s still working on accepting that this is really happening— before, Dean would have been embarrassed. Now, it just winds its way through him warm and pleasant, has him saying, “C’mere already.”

Cas doesn’t even give him shit about being the reason they’re drawing this out in the first place. He climbs back on the bed, hooks an arm around Dean’s back and slides him further up the bed, leans down and kisses him as he rolls their hips together. Dean groans against his mouth, rises up to meet him.

“Dean,” Cas says, breathing hard, his erection pressing into Dean’s skin.

“Yeah?”

“Will you imagine us some lube, or should we get started on the manufacturing process now?”

Dean snorts, shoving at Cas’ shoulder. “Shut up.”

Cas sits up on his knees, laughing, and Dean lobs the bottle of lube that appears in his hand at Cas’ head. Naturally, he catches it in midair, smirking.

Cas readjusts as he squeezes some lube into his hand, settles between Dean’s legs and works one finger into him after another, curling and stroking them in a way that leaves Dean gasping, knowing Dean will want the preparation but rushing through it as quickly as he can get away with.

“Okay?” he asks, and it’s all Dean can do to nod wordlessly in response.

Cas moves him where he wants him. Dean lets out a stuttering breath as Cas lines himself up and presses into him and stays there, leans over to press a lingering kiss to the line of his throat. It’s strange, Dean thinks—this is the closest to Cas he’s ever been, but it feels so familiar, such an obvious extension of everything that led them to this moment that he marvels at it.

As Cas lifts himself back up, sets up a steady rhythm, Dean brushes his hair back from his sweaty forehead, takes another good, long look at him.

“This is another thing I didn’t know,” Dean says. “You kinda blindsided me, before. There at the end. The way you looked at me...” Even with the distracting heat of Cas’ body pressing against and into him, the joy and the pleasure of it—he can picture it perfectly, will remember it forever, all of Cas’ raw emotion, his love written on his face so plainly that he knew it for truth even before the terms of Cas’ deal proved it. “You’re usually so stoic, I thought it was a sudden shift. But I had it backwards. That was just the face you put on. This, here”—he traces his fingers over one of Cas’ eyebrows, down the side of his face—“the way you’re looking at me now, like you’ve never wanted anything more. This is the real you. You were holding out on me.”

For just a beat, Cas’ rhythm stutters. “I was trying to protect you.”

“I know,” Dean says. “You shouldn’t have had to.” He curls his hand around the back of Cas’ neck, pulls him down into a long, lingering kiss.

“I believe you once referred to us as a couple of dumbasses,” Cas says, pressing his lips to the corner of Dean’s mouth.

Dean huffs a laugh that turns into a breathy moan as Cas fucks into him. “Well,” Dean says, “for what it’s worth, I’m glad it wasn’t actually the end.”

“Me, too,” Cas says.

Dean reaches between them and takes his dick in his hand, strokes himself slowly as he watches Cas. It’s easy, unhurried—he doesn’t have to worry about whether anyone is going to walk in, whether this is going to be the only chance he gets to do this, whether he’s fucking it up. He gets to be wholly in the moment, gets to experience everything in perfect, miraculous clarity. He gets to watch every expression that flickers across Cas’ face, gets to run his free hand along the taut muscles in his arms, his chest, gets to hear every catch in his breath as he buries himself inside of Dean.

Cas is watching Dean, too—and for once, Dean doesn’t feel embarrassed by it, doesn’t shy away, doesn’t worry about what it is Cas sees when he looks at him. Instead, it just adds to his arousal, sends a spike of heat through him that has him arching up into Cas, coming over his own stomach. Cas runs one hand along the curve of Dean’s spine, mouths at his bared throat, easing him through it.

“You’re beautiful,” Cas says softly, propping himself up on his arms to look down at Dean, gaze just as piercing as it’s always been, seeing down into the undeniable core of him.

Dean takes a second to catch his breath before he says, “You sap.”

“Do you want me to stop?”

“Never,” he says, smiling up at Cas—Cas and his wild hair, his flushed skin, his eyes bright and full of honest, endless adoration. “Anyway, look who’s talking.”

It's as though that gives Cas some kind of permission; he groans, squeezing his eyes shut and thrusting into Dean harder, faster. Dean is still coming down from his own high, but he sighs into it, tightens his thighs against the backs of Cas' legs, urging him on, wanting, in some small way, to repay Cas for everything he's done for him over the years, all he's sacrificed. Cas pants against Dean's neck, comes with Dean stroking his hands through his hair, whispering, "I got you," against his ear.

They lie just like that for a minute as Cas' breathing slows, until at last he presses one more kiss to the side of Dean's face and, without even bothering to ask if Dean wants to do this the long way, he gets up to make the short trip into the bathroom for a washcloth.

He's so tender as he cleans them up, something reverent in the way he drags the cloth along Dean's stomach. It sets something alight in Dean's chest, a strange sort of longing he can't quite pin down.

"I suppose we don't have to rest, here, if we don't want to," Dean says, running his fingers idly along Cas' shoulder, down the curve of his bicep.

"That's right."

"I want to," Dean says. "I want to know what it's like to fall asleep next to you."

Because he does—he wants to know what it's like to lie in bed with Cas as the light fades, to drift off safe and warm in each other's arms, what it's like to wake up with their limbs tangled together.

"I'd like to know that, too," Cas says, setting the washcloth aside. He settles in next to Dean with his head on his shoulder, one arm flung across his chest, his leg hooked over Dean's own.

"Hey," Dean says, as he lets the sleep he wants but doesn't need settle over him. "Love you."

"Love you, too," Cas murmurs.

Dean's last thought, before he drifts off, is that he's pretty sure he could hear that forever and it would never get old.

—

When it comes time to get dressed, Dean lets them cheat.

He laughs as Cas switches from one outfit to another with a little flourish of his hand—a suit and vest and coat all in black, leather pants and jacket, jeans and t-shirt and flannel, and then, absurdly, a sloth onesie, and less absurdly, a perfect Han Solo getup.

It feels like an impossible choice, even with an eternity of possibility ahead of them, but eventually, Dean chews at his lip and says, "Can I try?"

At Cas' nod, he waves his hand—and there Cas is, looking ordinary and gorgeous in a soft henley and worn-in jeans, tears starting to form at the knees.

Cas doesn't question it; just follows Dean downstairs, takes a seat at the table as Dean opens the fridge. It may magically have exactly the ingredients he needs, but the breakfast Dean cooks is just him, all muscle memory from four decades of caring for people he loves.

They eat scrambled eggs and crispy bacon and toast with their feet bumping together under the table.

"How is it?" Dean asks.

"It's great," Cas says, around a mouthful of eggs.

"Really great?" Dean says, one eyebrow raised. "Or tastes like molecules but you're being nice?"

Cas swallows, smiles over at him. "I can do whatever I want here, too," he says, "and I want to taste your food like a human would taste it. So really great."

Dean rides that good feeling through breakfast, carries it with him as they get up to clear the table.

"I'll wash, you dry?" Dean says, setting their plates in the sink.

The tilt of Cas' head says he's puzzled, but he simply nods, taking his place next to Dean at the counter. He doesn't question why Dean doesn't want to shortcut this, either, and he finds that he appreciates it; he isn't sure he actually has an answer, tries to work it out as Cas stands next to him quietly with a towel in hand.

Dean scrubs off the pan, fills the sink with hot water, gets out soap and a washcloth—and by the time Cas is drying the last dish, he's figured it out.

This is something so mundane, and he's never done it with Cas before. Either Cas wasn't around the bunker or he didn't actually need to eat, so Dean had felt weird about asking him to participate in the cleanup, or he was so newly human and hurting that Dean hadn't wanted to subject him to chores just yet, or a thousand other excuses he could make if he tried hard enough. He's done this with Sam and Jack and Mary, but not with Cas.

There are a million little things like this, simple, stupid things they just...skipped over. Things they might have eventually got around to, if—

Dean leans his hip on the counter, faces Cas as he idly dries his hands. "You ever wonder," he says, "what it would have been like, if we had, y'know. Had more time together on Earth. If maybe...I dunno, maybe if you were human and we got to grow old together."

"Yes," Cas says, quietly. "All the time."

"I wanted to have a life together there," Dean says. "I wanted years of all this mundane crap, the cooking and cleaning, bickering over stupid shit, hell, maybe even trying to work some regular job." He huffs a laugh, rubs a hand against his aching chest. "Live in a house with some goddamn windows, I don't know, plant a garden in the backyard. Just—everything. I wanted to figure it all out with you."

Cas reaches up, grazes his fingers along the side of Dean's face, frowning. "I wanted that, too." He cups Dean's face in his hand, runs his thumb along his cheek. After a moment's hesitation, he says, "Close your eyes."

Dean obliges, waits until Cas says, "Okay," before opening them again.

Cas looks—he looks older. Has made himself look older. Not by much, maybe five or ten years, but the difference is striking. He's softer around the edges, the laugh lines around his eyes are deeper. Dean traces his fingers over them, then back into Cas' hair, graying at the temples, down to his short salt-and-pepper beard.

"Sorry," Cas says, alarmed by whatever look must be playing over Dean's face. "Sorry, I'll —"

"No," Dean says hoarsely, something burning at the back of his throat. "No, it's okay. It looks good on you."

He brings his other hand up to frame Cas' face, kisses him deeply before sliding his arms down around Cas' back and pulling him into a hug, burying his face against his hair.

"Seems stupid to be sad in heaven, huh?" Dean says.

"No," Cas says, holding onto him just as tightly. "Not at all. You can be whatever you want to be."

—

Life in heaven is a lot of things, but it will never be the life they would have had on Earth.

But what has Dean done if not always tried to make the best of what he was given? He spent every moment he had on Earth doing just that, and heaven gives him—gives them—a lot to work with.

You can, as it turns out, create a whole life in an eternity. You can do incredible, miraculous things, things beyond your wildest imagination, but it's the mundane things that Dean likes the most: The family dinners he never got to have, the snowball fights, the hours spent lounging around on the beach, the friendships untainted by betrayal and unmarred by a lifetime spent fighting an unwinnable battle.

Dean spends an infinite amount of time with people he loves, wakes up next to Cas on an infinite number of mornings, watches as Cas becomes friends with Charlie and Jody and Donna. Sees what Cas looks like when he's truly happy, when he doesn't have the threat of death constantly tagging along behind him.

He never gets tired of making Cas breakfast, of sitting next to him in comfortable silence, of doing something as simple as sitting around and catching up on all the TV they never got to watch, all the new shows and movies that have come out since they were on Earth.

Sometimes, they don't quite manage to make it the whole way through—they wind up resting their heads on each others' shoulders and dozing off when things get boring, wind up getting

distracted kissing on the couch even when things are still interesting.

And when they don't like any given ending, they laugh about it together, then rip it up and create a new one.

End Notes

[here's](#) a rebloggable version on tumblr if you're so inclined!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!