

I Follow Rivers

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I Follow Rivers

by [Crossroads Blues](#)

Summary

Dean wakes up in the middle of Rocky Mountain National Park with no recollection how he got there, Castiel abandons all and sets out on a journey across America to do what he believes to be the right thing and Sam just tries to keep it all together under threat of Michael and other darker entities. Forces of Evil never sleep and they already have plans for Winchesters and their wayward angel, which mean absolutely nothing good for the latter... and for the world.

Canon-Divergent post s14e08 Byzantium || Tags and Warnings TBA || Weekly Updates

Notes

This is your author! I'd like to say giant thanks to Winchester_of_the_lord for betaing this, Lou has been a huge help in making this readable. I hope you enjoy this fic and happy reading!

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

“Come as you are...”

Dean groaned and opened his eyes. Kurt Cobain’s vocals were flowing from the radio in the Impala and were likely the reason behind Dean’s awakening.

“As you were...”

The hunter blinked several times, sitting up in the front seat, letting out a muffled ‘ouch’ when his knee hit the steering wheel.

“As I want you to be...”

Dean turned off the cassette player, pressing the button slightly harder than necessary. Granted, Nirvana had incredibly good music, but Dean could only process so many sounds in the morning. Especially without coffee..

Groaning, Dean got out of the car, stretching the stiff muscles in his back, causing his spine to crack several times. He rubbed his back, letting out an elongated sigh - even though he never hated sleeping in Baby, the nights spent in the car did leave him sore and with a backache.

“Where the fuck...” the hunter trailed off, looking at his surroundings and not recognizing anything. The car was parked on the edge of the forest with the first line of dark green pines towering just meters away from the car. In front of him, looming in the distance were faded grey mountains, with glistening snow on their tops. The sky was covered in washed out cream clouds and fog, creating a rather heavy, yet, at the same time somewhat light atmosphere that induced calmness and peace. Dean never liked sunny weather, no, not really. He always felt that the star was too bright and didn’t let him think in peace. As such, this cloudy weather felt like Heaven to him. The only thing that bugged Dean was the reason for him being there , since he had absolutely no recollection of events that might have led him to wake up in his car on the edge of a forest.

Dean let out a half-impressed, half-intrigued hum and reached out into the back pocket of his jeans in search for his phone. After pressing the power button a couple of times, Dean groaned in irritation and rolled his eyes. Of course it’s dead. Why wouldn’t it be dead? Just his luck.

He climbed back into the car, and opened the glove box, trying to find a power bank and a cable in the mess in there. Tossing aside a couple of phones and a folding knife, Dean finally reached the bottom of the glove box and finally felt the cable. He proceeded to yank it out, hoping that the power bank would be attached, which it was. However, just as Dean wanted to plug in his phone, he noticed that something else fell out of the overstuffed compartment. Leaning over to the other side, he reached to the floor and retrieved the fallen object, which turned out to be a blue tie. Castiel’s tie.

“What the hell...” He brought the tie closer to his face to make sure that it was indeed Castiel’s. Dean let out a confused sigh. If Castiel’s tie was in his glove box, where was the

rest of the angel? Dean turned around to check the backseat, finding another clue of Castiel's presence in his car. The angel's trench coat was casually draped over the back seat. The hunter leaned over and picked it up, feeling the fabric. There was no question about it, it was Castiel's. Dean furrowed his brows. He didn't remember the last time the angel parted with his coat. Unless... he was forced to.

Dean couldn't elaborate further on the macabre thought, as his phone beeped cheerfully, signaling that it gained enough charge to be turned on.

"Frigging finally," muttered the hunter, grabbing the device. After a couple of angry taps and swipes, Dean managed to get into the Maps app.

"The hell am I doing in Rocky Mountain National Park?" He stared incredulously at the map. Dean scoffed and started the car. As he did that, he noticed a piece of paper lying on the dash. It was a 7-day car pass to Rocky Mountain National Park.

"What the hell..." Dean was already so confused at this point that he wasn't sure what he was more confused about: the fact that he somehow ended up in a national park or the fact that he got there through legal means with a pre-purchased pass.

The hunter stared at the pass dumbfoundedly for several moments. *Whatever*, he thought, and dialed up Castiel's number. Dean waited a couple of minutes, just to be greeted by Castiel's voicemail. "Make... your voice... a mail..."

"Hey Cas, it's Dean. I, uh, found your coat and your tie in Impala and I am in a national park for some reason, so I got a lot of questions and not a lot of answers. Call me back, would you?"

Dean hung up and dialed the next number. After a couple of rings, Sam's tired voice was heard through the receiver.

"Dean... good morning..." The younger Winchester sounded sleepy and a bit annoyed.

"Did I wake you up or what?"

"Yeah, it's 5 am, what the hell, dude?"

"Oh." Dean realised he didn't check the time before calling his brother. "Listen, uh, do you have any idea what I may be doing in Rocky Mountain National Park?"

Sam sighed loudly. "You took off with Cas last evening, didn't tell me where you were going."

"Right, Cas... He showed up yet?"

"Nah. Is he not with you?"

"No. Found his coat and tie in the car, though."

"And you don't remember what happened last night?" Sam sounded more awake at this point.

“Nope. Nada. Anyway, I’m making my way over to the bunker, we’ll figure out what happened then. Try buzzing him, he didn’t answer my call, maybe you’ll have more luck.” With a resigned “okay” Sam hung up.

Dean stared through the window for a couple more minutes. “What the hell?” he asked nobody in particular and with a sharp movement turned up the sound on the cassette player.

“As a friend, as a friend, as an old enemy...”

Dean pedalled the gas and with a sharp turn steered over to the road. He’ll figure out what happened. He always did.

It’s amazing how scared a powerful celestial being can be. Castiel was terrified. He had been terrified for *weeks*. No, not just terrified. More like feeling every cell of his vessel fill up with sticky, slithering fear that slowly made its way to his heart, causing it to skip a beat every now and then, channeling the angel’s grace into the farthest corners of his being, where it couldn’t combat the fear that encompassed the angel. That’s how terrified the angel was.

Castiel wasn’t sure whether he felt fear before he met Dean, before he started to become more human, but he figured that it didn’t really matter, even though the question “what if I had never saved Dean” popped up in his mind more often than he’d like it to. Would he be feeling that scared in that moment if he hadn’t saved Dean from the pit all these years ago? Castiel didn’t know and, if he was being honest with himself, didn’t want to know. It didn’t matter anyway. He wouldn’t be in that situation now if he hadn’t saved Dean back then.

Castiel spent the weeks following the deal with the Empty in fear. It wasn’t that he was afraid to go, no, he was fine with that. With the idea of dying. He hoped of course that his death would be for a bigger purpose, but the truth was, Castiel was tired and he didn’t really care anymore. He just feared that the way he would go out in would cause too much pain to the living. He was scared that Dean or Sam would try to do something to get him out of the deal, and hurt Jack in the process. He was terrified of the things the Shadow might do to accelerate him coming to the nothingness and that fear was always there. Like a dull, throbbing pain he could never get rid of.

Castiel tried to postpone the inevitable. He tried his very best to keep any good, let alone *happy* feelings locked away deep inside him, not letting any of them close enough to the surface to make him feel happy. But.. he couldn’t keep doing that forever, and he knew that. The temptation, the wish for happiness was too much. Everyone wished for happiness, and so did Castiel, but the difference was that he couldn’t afford to be happy. That’s why he had to go.

Castiel lowered his head as he walked along the country road, kicking up stones on every few steps. Last night was a selfish indulgence. It was cutting close to feeling happy, and he *would be* happy, if the thought of what he had to do wasn’t looming over him the entire night. That’s why, after this last night, he had to set his plan in motion. The plan in itself was ridiculously simple. Castiel figured that he couldn’t die around Sam and Dean, for the reason that he felt like his death would just add on more problems for the Winchesters, and they already had their hands full. So the angel came up with a solution. In his time on Earth, Castiel observed

how wounded animals would sometimes move away from the tribe or their home, and look for an undisturbed place to die alone instead. Castiel wanted to do just the same. He would leave his family in order to avoid causing them anymore pain and vanish somewhere far away from them. Somewhere they wouldn't have to witness his death. His failure. His vain attempt to do things right. He had done his preparations: Castiel wrote a letter to be delivered to the brothers to explain things, and he made arrangements to have his body burned so that he wouldn't be brought back.

Castiel was feeling slightly uncomfortable without his familiar tie and coat, but they had to be ditched to make sure he is not as recognisable. The angel stretched out his arm with a raised thumb, trying to catch a car. After numerous cars rushed past him, a pick-up truck with rusty grey exterior stopped near him.

"Where you wanna go?" the driver, a cheerful 20-something blonde woman dressed in a flannel and denim shorts, asked him.

"I-70," Castiel replied, squinting at the sun.

"Great, I'm driving that way! Get in!"

Without hesitation, Castiel got into the passenger seat of the truck and the car took off.

"I'm Chloe." The woman offered him a friendly grin. "Your name is?"

"Castiel." The angel was eyeing the woman with interest. "You do this often? Pick up lonely men on the road?"

Chloe laughed. "You seem harmless."

The angel raised eyebrows at her statement, but chose not to comment, instead trying to engage in something humans called 'small talk' "So where are you going?"

"I'm actually going to Los Angeles," Chloe replied with a smile, "Big city, big dreams, amirite?"

Castiel nodded, when an idea popped up in his head. "Do you mind if I tag along until LA with you?"

Chloe gave him a surprised look, prompting him to come up with some excuse. "I, too, want to follow my dreams," the angel said awkwardly, "It's okay if I can't, I understand-"

"You can tag along," interrupted him Chloe, "I'm alone on this road trip, and I'd love to have company, actually."

"Thank you so much!" Castiel relaxed a bit and leaned back into his seat. Chloe seemed nice and Los Angeles seemed as good a place as any to die. Plus, he doubted that Winchesters would look for him in LA.

Meanwhile Chloe turned up the volume on the radio that was blasting Highway to Hell.

“My car, my rules,” she informed the angel, “Rule number one - you do not complain about the music, or I will throw you out.”

Castiel raised his arms in a placating gesture. “I don’t mind the music.”

“Good.” Chloe started bobbing her head along to the music. “LA, here we come!” she announced cheerfully, just as the chorus started playing.

“Here we come,” Castiel quietly repeated after her. It was his last road trip. Might as well enjoy it.

End Notes

Please leave comments (no harsh critique, please) and kudos!

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